

JEEVADHARA

The Living Christ

LISTENING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Editorial Introduction

God breathed his breath into bits of clay and the clay became us, people, men and women who live, think, love, invent, hope and celebrate. Humankind is the pentecostal, pneumatic charismatic movement initiated by God (Gn 2. 7). People everywhere in their living and loving, in their quest for truth and beauty, in their struggle for justice, in their creativity and their foy, are the symbols of the Spirit of God and the sign of the Spirit's presence and action on our earth. The Spirit has always been with humankind, inspiring its search and its restlessness and provoking responses to God's upward, futureward call to build its own history, shape its own destiny and keep pressing onward to its own fuller, finer self.

Jesus breathed on his disciples, on us, and on our world, and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (Jn 20. 22-23), and we became a movement of freedom and forgiveness, of love and liberation, of the New Man and the New Earth. Jesus enhanced, energized afresh, and threw new challenges to God's charismatic movement on earth, humankind. The history of the movement has been uneven. It has known openness to the Breath of God as well as closedness. It has struggled for light and liberty, and celebrated the human in song and dance. It has also held people captive in subhuman wretchedness. The movement has always need of Jesus' Sabbath-breaking, tradition-breaking, wall-breaking, temple-demolishing, man-affirming and life-giving Spirit in order to be loyal to itself and its endless possibilities. (see Mk 2; 3. 1-6; 7. 1-23; Jn 4 and Eph 2. 14; Jn 2. 13-22; Mk 2. 27; Jn 19. 33-34 with 7. 37-39 and 4. 13-14).

Sometimes we become keenly aware of the Spirit's nearness and companionship. Often, quite unawares, we let ourselves be inspired, moved and enabled to be free and to live imaginatively. We are the Spirit's symbols in all that we create, in the friendships we build, in the space we enlarge for the human, and in our struggle against everything that diminishes and alienates men and women. But when we become conscious of the Spirit we

also tend to measure him by our prejudices and our fears, to misunderstand his ways and misinterpret his intent. It is therefore necessary to listen carefully and hear what the Spirit says to the churches, to the world, to people everywhere. For He is the Teacher who leads us to the complete truth, including the truth about Himself.

This number of *Jeevadhara* is an attempt at listening to the Spirit at a time when our awareness of His presence and action has become both intense and confused.

The first three studies, done independently by three of our Bible scholars, come to a substantial agreement as to the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian/human affairs and as to the nature of the Spirit's work in the history we are making. We have here some of the signs and norms required to discern today what experiences are authentically of the Spirit, and what probably are not. John Berchmans's conclusion of a long study of Luke's theology of the Spirit is that "through his liberating activity the Spirit makes the justice of Yahweh available to all those who are oppressed. The Spirit is the Spirit of liberation. For the people, the power of the Spirit working in Jesus was another sign that Jesus was the prophet sent by God for their liberation. These Christological considerations remain the ever valid guidelines for our understanding of the working of the Spirit in our times". Section after section of the study arrives at the same inference. The final paragraph of this Introduction, summing up all the findings, has therefore the weight and cogency of convergent testimonies. Berchmans shows that the Spirit who is on Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy and of a ministry of liberation. The entire Biblical tradition, prophecy and ministry have to do with justice to the poor and the setting free of the oppressed. That is why the work of the Spirit provokes situations of crisis and conflict within which the prophets and the prophetic people become signs of contradiction. The Servant is anointed with the Spirit and sent for the victory of justice all over the earth and the liberation of the downtrodden. He is to struggle for these even at the cost of suffering and death.

The Spirit therefore is no tranquilliser, no inspirer of mere pious effervescence which ignores or glosses over the hard realities of economic and political life and leaves untouched the structures of exploitation of the majority of men and women and the arrangements of classist oppression. Mathew Vellanickal, in his independent study of a different New Testament author, John, concurs with Berchmans. He wishes to emphasize the fact that the study brings out "a particular aspect of the Spirit which is lost sight of in the contemporary discussions on the Spirit and His work in the believers" and others. This particular and topically important aspect is that "the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus who was engaged in a life-long struggle against the power of evil or sin that introduced various alienations into the world, spiritual, psychological, moral, sociological etc. Jesus won this fight of liberating man from every alienation but it cost Him His life. It is this liberating Spirit that is communicated to the disciples of Jesus, to all Christians. Hence life in the Spirit is not soft and easy but full of bitter struggle against all kinds of alienations that enslave the man of today". This concern runs through the article and acts as a unifying strand. Blood in the fourth Gospel is the symbol of death, and water flowing with blood is the symbol of the Spirit of Him who gave his life for the world and was wounded for our liberation. The Spirit therefore means struggle against a world which hates, oppresses and fabricates and maintains mechanisms of injustice. Baptism in the Spirit therefore amounts to a total conversion and a veritable rebirth in attitudes and values, "thus preparing him (the Christian) for the life of struggle against the world of sin". The Spirit descends to give birth to a new creation, to give existence to a new people living a new style of life at the level of the heart as well as at the level of socio-economic realities. The Spirit descends on Jesus to enable Him to fulfil His mission of taking away the sins of the world "and to bring about a revolutionary change by establishing the new humanity where truth, justice and love abide". "The Spirit is operative in the Church (the Christian disciples) in so far as it brings about the new humanity by means of struggling and fighting against the sinful and oppressive elements in the world."

C. M. Cherian arrives at the same point by another road. The context and framework of his thought is the unity of

reality disclosed in the Incarnation: the wedding of matter to the Spirit, of the world to God, of our human endeavour to transform the earth to God's gift of the new earth. It is in the power of the Spirit that God and we act together, act creatively. Jesus is the place where the role of the Spirit (along with our own role) is best indicated. "His own person, work and message are filled with the Spirit. His whole mission was a process of transformation by the Spirit both for Himself and for those who responded to His invitation to self-commitment. It was in the eternal Spirit that he faced the tensions and struggles, labours and pains, challenges and disappointments, rewards and joys of His earthly life and offered Himself without blemish to His Father, and He established through His resurrection an absolutely new form of human existence." And we know that human existence is not private, it is at once personal and social, finding embodiment in structures of the heart as well as in structures of the group, of the socio-political cultural community. "In the Old Testament the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit denotes God at work in individual human beings, in the people as a whole, and in the world. When the Spirit's activity is received, revolutionary consequences follow." Some illustrations of such revolutionary consequences are the preference for what is just and noble in the case of Joseph and David, and courageous action for the liberation of the people from servitude and oppression in the case of Moses and Gideon. For, "in every sphere of truth, in the sphere of our personal social, economic, political and religious life we are invariably offered the guidance of God's Spirit".

Here Cherian lays emphasis on a point of capital importance for life in the Spirit and for the correction of the imbalance that has marked most if not all the movements known in history as charismatic or pentecostal. He underlines the link between the Spirit's activity and the cosmic and universal significance of God's covenant-plan. "There is no life or area of life which is not sacred, which is exempt from the entry and influence of the Holy Spirit." He cannot agree with William Barclay that the "Spirit is connected with the extraordinary and the abnormal", the unrepeatable moments and the moments of ecstasy, and that "the manifestations of the Spirit are wonderful and miraculous".

But he is at one with Barclay in maintaining that "Every discovery in every sphere of truth that man has made is the work of the Spirit.... Every great poem, every great piece of music, every scientific discovery is the work of the Spirit". "It is not only the theologian in his study,... the prophet with his message, who is working in the power of the Spirit; the man at the bench and at the machine, the man in whose hands wood and metal become obedient, the mechanic, the engineer, the carpenter, the fitter the mason, are all men of the Spirit, and can and must, serve God in the Spirit." Before this great and beautiful truth of the cosmic presence and action of the Spirit and the universality of his charisms, several presuppositions of charismatic movements with some of their top-heavy questions and lop-sided vocabulary stand gently invited to correct themselves. Mention may be made in particular of a tendency noticed in many places and persons to situate intellectual work, research, criticism, analysis and scholarship outside the realm of the Spirit's gifts, or even as opposed to the experience of his charisms.

Jyoti Sahi brings an artist's experience in support of the view that the Spirit's presence and action are universal—a view which relativizes what is known as the movement of charismatic renewal and changes its perspectives by setting it within a far wider and profounder experience of the Spirit in the totality of Christian and human history. Sahi maintains that as inspirational Force and as the Mover of the imagination, the Spirit is active within all the imaginative and creative movements of the human race. "The Holy Spirit is in fact the symbolic process, for the symbols are 'inspired' and therefore arise out of the Holy Spirit. Every truly felt expression of the imagination within man somehow shows forth the movement of the Holy Spirit." "I feel that Force which "brings to birth in beauty", present in the great insights of Indian poetry from the time of the Vedas down to our own times... I feel that in Indian thought there is a deep sense of life being inspired." This line of thought, passing through the central art-symbol in India of the dancing body, culminates in the presentation of Jesus as the perfect symbol of the Spirit. "The Holy Spirit was the way Christ walked, the way he looked, and spoke..." Finally Sahi rejoins the first three authors in concluding that "the symbols of the Holy Spirit are, therefore,

symbols of Liberation, of the freeing of the body from its inherently static gravity... Every movement of the (dancing) body celebrates the presence of the Spirit. This transformation will finally be realized in the Resurrection of the Body". Our body is not only the little living matter our shirts encircle but our whole self, including the entire socio-cultural reality in which we live as well as the totality of the human group and the cosmos. The Spirit is at work to resurrect, transform and liberate into Life and dance the whole of this reality. Sahi's article is, moreover, of seminal significance for the ongoing discussion on an authentic Indian theology.

References have been made above to the Pentecostal movement or Charismatic renewal. Lionel Mascarenhas ably tells the story of the movement and offers an evaluation, indicating both its strengths and assets and its weaknesses and dangers. The greatest defect and danger the Renewal faces is Fundamentalism which appears in a literal approach to the Bible and a superficial understanding of the Church and of the uniqueness of Christianity. What Mascarenhas says about Fundamentalism, the Charismatic movement and the Church in India as a whole will do well to heed. The lack of social concern may be disastrous. Mascarenhas admits that there is in the movement a real danger "of a cosy turning in oneself", but he thinks that social structures will be renewed through the renewal of men and that a social consciousness is growing in the movement. Still, it is strange that a movement which bases itself squarely on the Bible and on an experience of the Spirit of the Lord should not have, for its leading concern, from the very start, the central preoccupation with the Bible from Exodus on through all the prophets to Jesus Christ who described his Spirit-anointed mission in terms of the liberation of the oppressed, the setting free of the downtrodden, the defense of exploited sheep from marauders and thieves, the bringing of good news to the poor and an end to every kind of marginalization of men and women (see Mt 11:1-4; Lk 4:18; Jn 10: 1-18; Jn 4; Mk 2. etc.) that a movement of renewal which can be brought about only in obedience to the outward-looking new commandment of love for one another, should set out with a distinctly inward-looking tendency and a taste for "a cosy turning in on oneself". The expectation that renewal of hearts will result in renewal of social structures rests on a basic error about the nature of society that society is made up of juxtaposed

individuals. It is mistakenly imagined that putting together a large number of good people will give us a good social order. The position would also necessarily tie up the existence of unjust structures with the existence of unjust people.

Among the assets of the Renewal movement Mascarenhas rightly counts "its experiential approach to the faith", the birth of a new hunger for the Word of God, and a "strong emphasis on community". Group prayer marked with freedom and joy is also a remarkable feature of the movement. Faith is an interpersonal engagement, essentially experiential. Efforts to correct the error of reducing it to "cerebral knowledge" and recital of dogmas had become widespread long before the birth of the charismatic movement. It is not a question of 'doctrine becoming experience' (could that really happen?), but of faith-experience kindling faith-experience. But could we possibly speak of religious experience and God-experience without speaking at the same time of world-experience and man-experience without which, in a tradition of Creation and Incarnation, the former cannot be had? Here we are once more encountering the social concern and our responsibility for our and God's earth. When we speak of "India's spiritual heritage" and of "our pilgrimage to the sources of Indian spirituality", should we not also ask about their relation or non-relation to the social history of India, to the creation and perpetuation, for centuries, of untouchability and bonded labour resulting in the humiliation and destruction of millions and generations of men and women, the finest image and symbol of God and the Spirit there is on earth? Hence the aptness of Mascarenhas's call to the charismatic renewal to become indigenous, to enter into the Church's (and the nation's) concern for justice and peace, and into their concern for inter-religious dialogue. These are not three different concerns but aspects of the one concern of God to see his kingdom realized on earth.

Among the weaknesses of the movement Mascarenhas points out the tendency evinced by some to give to "charisms" a centrality not found in the New Testament, and to assign pride of place to secondary, sensational gifts like speaking in tongues. The author has a fine account of this particular gift, also known as glossolalia. To complete the appreciation of this phenomenon, an attentive reading of I Corinthians 14:1b-33a is earnestly re-

commended. Since this passage is often carelessly handled in charismatic circles, its leading ideas are listed below.

1) Paul recognizes glossolalia as a legitimate spiritual gift. He himself has it, and wishes that everyone had it though he knows that not everybody has every gift (14:2, 5, 14-15, 18; 12:10, 30).

2) But prophecy is a greater gift and Paul would have us be more zealous for prophecy than for glossolalia. "The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues..." "In church I would rather speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others than speak thousands of words in a tongue." (14:5, 1, 19 and 28).

3) The reasons for this preference are as follows:

Glossolalia is speaking to God, not to people; it is not understood by any human being; "you will be speaking to the air" (14:2, 9, 11, 16). To prophesy on the other hand is to speak to people and bring them a message which is constructive, encouraging and consoling (14:2-3, 6).

In glossolalia my spirit prays, "but my mind is unproductive". It is better to pray and sing both with the spirit and with the mind. The mind's prayer, intelligible prayer, is the only one that is meaningful in a group (14:14-16).

Glossolalia benefits the speaker himself; he "builds himself up". It is of no value to the church or the community. It does not build up the other person (14:4, 17). But the one who prophesies builds up a church. That is why prophecy is greater than glossolalia. So "keep striving for the upbuilding of the Church so that you may excel" (14:5, 12).

Glossolalia is for private devotion, for private personal edification, for speaking to oneself and to God (14:2, 28). It is not for community. When thanks is given in glossolalia the community cannot respond with an Amen, there is no communication, the speaker and the listener are "barbarians" to each other (14:16-17, 9-11, 2, 19). Hence "if there be no interpreter, let the speaker in tongues be silent in church — let him speak to himself and to God" (14:28).

4) But glossolalia could become prophecy if it is interpreted as a message, a revelation, a knowledge, a teaching — something that instructs the community, fosters its unity and builds it up in love (14:5, 6, 26).

5) Therefore he who speaks in a tongue should “keep praying that he (or another) may be given the gift of (understanding and) interpreting tongues” (14:13, 5, 26-27).

6) It follows that glossolalia may be publicly exercised, used “in church”, only after making sure that there is someone to interpret it, that an interpretation for the benefit of the community will be given. Otherwise let the speaker in tongues be silent “in church” (14:26-28).

7) Even when there is an interpreter, let there be moderation, let only two or three speak in tongues at a session, and that each in his turn (14:27).

8) Paul is particular to point out that laying emphasis on gifts which seem showy and sensational like glossolalia, rather than on gifts that really matter like love, shows immaturity in mind and thought. He would have us grow up, stop being children in our thinking, and begin to be critical, discriminating and discerning (14:20; see IC 13).

9) Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12 to show that being subjected to foreign languages of conquerors which one could not understand, is God’s judgement on people who refuse to listen to the clear message of the prophets. “The unintelligible speech then becomes a sign of God’s judgement on the people who do not believe... The only social purpose for speaking in tongues in a group without interpretation is to strike terror into the hearts of unbelievers who listen to it and thereby perceive the strange, mysterious judgements of God... Yet when the whole Church assembles and there is general tongues-speaking, an unexpected result takes place with regard to uninstructed persons and unbelievers who may enter: instead of being stricken by a sense of judgement as they hear the strange noise, they will declare that the church people are insane (14:21-23). Thus the sign meant for judgement misses the mark and produces the opposite effect”.

[W. F. Orr and J. A. Walther, I Corinthians (Anchor Bible), 1976, p. 309] "The purpose of prophecy, on the other hand, is to communicate a message primarily to the believers rather than to the unbelievers... the prophecy that was meant as a sign for those who believe turns out to be a sign for the unbelievers; for when a prophet is inspired to speak the message of God understandably, to address various sins of which people are guilty, and to exhibit evils that are being practised, the unbeliever feels the presence of God reaching into and changing his inmost being". (ibid; see IC 14:24) Thus the superiority of prophecy is once more established.

Prophecy today would include all the preaching and teaching which spring from Spirit-filled Faith, in the home, the parish, the mission station, the debates and books of theologians, the pastor's letters or the gathering of bishops. Its basic pattern consists in the annunciation of the Father's unconditional love for people and the denunciation of everything that opposes this love or hurts the people in any way whatsoever. Such prophetic ministry provokes crisis and conflict, for it is a call for a different kind of life and world, for different economic and political arrangements that will do justice to the dignity of all peoples and of every man and woman. It is this critical and conflictual power of prophecy that we sometimes miss in the charismatic renewal.

In sum the volume says that an adequate and effective Pentecostal Renewal will start from the following programme-words of Jesus in which Old Testament history comes to culmination and fulfilment and the Gospel history takes its origin:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind;
to set free the oppressed
and announce that the time has come
when the Lord will save his people" (Lk 4:18-19).

Anointed with Holy Spirit and Power

The phrase “anointed with the Holy Spirit and Power” is enough to electrify some of the members of the believing community today, especially if the phrase implies the possibility of a believer participating in the gift of ‘Spirit and Power’ with which Jesus was himself anointed. For us, the anointing with the Spirit has become a rarity, a spiritual luxury, a peripheral phenomenon of Christian existence. For the author of the third Gospel and the Acts, the Spirit of God constitutively belonged to the Christ-event, both in its personal and its communitarian dimensions. St. Luke seems to tell us in so many ways that the Spirit was the atmosphere in which the Christ-event unfolded itself. This article intends to examine some of the relevant texts in the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of St. Luke, and draw the exegetically important conclusions in this regard. This is done in complete openness to appreciate all the life-giving aspects of the presence of the Spirit of God in the believing community:

The Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the Word

Acts 10: 34-43 seem to form an inclusion. It opens with the saying of Peter, “God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (10: 34f) and concludes with the declaration, “everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (10: 43). In effect, the inclusion amounts to saying that all men, without any exception, who fear God and do what is right receive forgiveness of sin, through the name of Jesus. The key word in this inclusion is ‘everyone’. Again, Acts 11:1-18 seem to form another inclusion with a declaration similar to what has been noted in 10: 34-43. It opens with the saying “The apostles heard that the Gentiles also had received the Word of God” (11:1) and closes with the declaration, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life” (11:18). Here

the keyword is 'Gentiles'. Between the two inclusions (10: 34-43, 11: 1-18) stands the pericope of the Holy Spirit (10: 44-48). The conditions for receiving the Spirit are universally verifiable: fear of God, doing of what is right (10:35). The effect of the Spirit is forgiveness of sins (10: 43), and repentance into life (11: 18).

According to the text, "the Spirit fell upon all those who heard the Word". The hearing of the Word was enough to communicate the Spirit. The verb 'fell upon' expresses the forceful character of the communication of the Spirit to the hearers of the Word. With all these terms the author, in Acts 10: 44, makes a powerful presentation of the absolute spontaneity and freedom with which God takes possession of His Church and people through the medium of his Spirit. God is no respecter of persons. Anyone who fears Him, and does what is right, and thus hears the Word of God, is entitled to the gift of the Spirit. There is no distinction between the Jew and the Gentile. The distinction between the Jew and the Gentile was not valid before the Spirit. The fact that the Gentiles too received the Spirit was placed against the background of the astonishment of those who imagined that the gift of the Spirit was an exclusive claim of those who were circumcised. The Spirit of God is not an endowment for a privileged few, but a gift to all those who fear God and do good. It is the mark of all those who hear the Word.

The fact that the Spirit fell upon all who heard the Word should be weighed against the fact that nowhere in the Graeco-Roman cultures or Jewish religious context is there witness of a universal outpouring of the Spirit. True, in the beginning of the inter-testamental period, it was foreseen that every member of the community would be given the gift of the Spirit (Joel 2: 28-32). Otherwise, in the OT, the Spirit was foreseen as an endowment only of the leaders of the community (Judges, the King, the Servants of God, the Prophets). Even within the synoptic tradition, a progressive understanding in this regard is manifest. According to the present writer the person of Jesus is said to have had the Spirit only on the occasion of baptism. In Mt, besides baptism, we have the witness of the belief of the early church that the Spirit caused the birth of Jesus (Mt. 1: 18). Besides what was witnessed by Mc and Mt, the Gentile

church of Lc developed a much more comprehensive pneumatologically oriented Christology. It believed that the entire ministry of Jesus was done in the power of the Spirit (cfr. Lc 4: 1, 14, 18; Acts 10: 38). Further in Lc-Acts the disciples were promised the gift of the Spirit and were asked not to go out of the city before they were 'clothed with power from on high' (Lc. 24: 49). Paul writes as if the manifestation of the Spirit was a common phenomenon among the believers (1 Cor 12: 1, 4, 7, Gal. 5: 22). In Jn too the Spirit is promised (14: 16f, 26; 15: 26, 16: 7) to all those who believe in Jesus Christ. These witnesses make abundantly clear the belief of the early Church that the Spirit was the aegis under which she began to expand. Christianity was understood as a movement in which the Spirit of God was very active. The early witnesses are clear in their affirmation that the Spirit of God is something specific to developing Christianity.

Within the first inclusion noted above (Acts 10: 34-43), we have one of the most ancient forms of the kerygmatic preaching about Jesus Christ. Among other things in the text (10: 36-41), we note the following basic Christology.

Jesus who preached the word, the good news of peace, v. 36, was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power, v. 38. He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, v. 38. In this presentation, the anointing with the Holy Spirit and power is intimately associated with the ministries of Jesus. Jesus is presented as beginning His ministry as one anointed by the Spirit. Mc and Mt expressed the same idea by noting that Jesus taught and performed His miracles with authority and power (Mc 1: 22, 27; Mt. 7: 29). Lc seems to supplement the same idea (Lc 4: 36) by adding the element of 'Spirit' to 'power' in Acts 10: 36. For Lc, the Spirit is the equivalent of authority and power manifested in Jesus Christ. As of old, the anointing was for preaching the Word of God, the good news of peace. Concretely, Jesus was anointed by the Spirit to exercise his prophetic ministry. Added to that is the specifically Christological element, namely, Jesus goes about doing good and healing all that are oppressed by the devil. Thus it appears that in the understanding of Lc, in Acts 10: 36ff, the Spirit given to Jesus at baptism was the Spirit of the prophetic as well as of the liberating ministry. We have evidence elsewhere

in Lc that, at least a certain section of his contemporaries understood Jesus as "a prophet mighty in word and deed" (Lc 24: 19). It expresses, in a succinct form, the Christological understanding of the synoptics which presents Jesus as embracing immediately after receiving the Spirit in Baptism, upon a double ministry of teaching in a way that caused astonishment at his authority (Lc. 4: 32), and of liberating the sick from the power of the devil in a way that caused amazement and made people say, "with authority and power He commands the unclean spirit" (Lc. 4: 36). To Jesus' ministries of the first day, Mc and Lc add the cure of Peter's mother-in-law (Lc 4: 38-41; Mc 1: 29-34; Mt 8:14-17). Thus it becomes evident that the early Church understood the Spirit given to Jesus as the Spirit for the ministry. This should serve as the unchallengable Christological background for our understanding of the presence of the Spirit among us. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of the ministry for the community, just as it was for Jesus Christ.

Full of the Spirit and of wisdom, Acts 6:3

When the early Church was faced with the need of instituting the ministry of the diakonia (Acts 6: 1ff), the condition was clearly laid down that the men chosen should be, among other things, "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom". One of the seven deacons, Stephen, the best known among them, was manifestly "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (6: 5). This terminology is widely used in Lc-Acts, to express one of the leading characteristics of the unfolding Christ-event.

John the Baptist, the greatest of the Prophets (Lc. 7: 28), who "will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and will go before Him to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just to make ready for the Lord a people prepared", was promised to be filled with the Holy Spirit even in his mother's womb (Lc 1: 15-17). Again we have here a clear indication that the Spirit given to John the Baptist is the Spirit of the ministry. John's mother Elizabeth, was filled with the Holy Spirit as she pronounced the Magnificat in honour of Mary (Lc 1: 44-45). Filled with the Holy Spirit, John's father Zachary prophesied the Benedictus (Lc 1: 7ff). The righteous and devout man Simeon

had the Holy Spirit upon him who revealed to him that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ (Lc 2 : 26). In all these three cases the Spirit given is the Spirit of Prophecy. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, given in baptism, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil (Lc 4 : 1). Here the conflictual dimension of the Spirit in the Christ-event comes very prominently to the fore. The Spirit is presented as the stand-by for Jesus in His struggle with the evil one. After the temptations, Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Lc 4 : 14). Galilee is the region where the "prophet mighty in word and deed" exercised his ministry of preaching the good news of peace and doing the good work of healing all that were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10 : 38). Barnabas is said to be "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit" (11 : 24). It is interesting to note that the 'Barnabas stories' are mentioned in the context of the spread of the Gospel among the Greeks, in which Barnabas seems to have played an important role (cfr. Acts 11 : 19ff, 13 : 1ff). So the Spirit that was active in Barnabas was the Spirit of the ministry among the Gentiles. For Stephen the Spirit was the spirit of courage in a conflictual situation. He did such great wonders and signs among the people (6 : 8) that his adversaries could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke (6. 10). Just as Jesus stood invincible during His conflict with the devil, Stephen withstood the onslaughts of the adversaries of faith in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit that was manifested in Stephen was the same Spirit that Christ promised to His disciples when He said: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict." (Lc 21 : 15)

The reason for this invincibility must have been very clear to the biblical writers. The Spirit (Ruah) is the power of God, who is 'El'. The one who is possessed by this highest form of divine power cannot be bound by the limitations of the human, who is mere 'adam' (Basar) earth (flesh) (cfr. Is. 31 : 3). No wonder, no human could withstand the divine power that was operative in Stephen. The conclusion that clearly emerges from the survey of the above-mentioned text is that it is not a

uniform reality that is meant when some biblical person is said to have the Spirit upon him. Particularly, what the Spirit brings about, by His presence, is varied. All the same, for the author of Lc-Acts, the Spirit was the indispensable stand-by in the process of the unfolding of the Christ-event.

They laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit, Acts 8:17; 19:6.

There are two instances recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, when the absence of the gift of the Spirit was acutely felt. Both texts are riddled with historical and exegetical problems. Without a discussion of these issues here, it need only be observed how the early Church understood the presence of the Spirit as the sign of authenticity of Christian experience. In the command of Jesus regarding the gradual unfolding of the missionary activities of the early Church, Samaria figures among the centres where the gospel has to be preached before it reaches the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). How Samaria was evangelised is narrated in a section that can be called the "Philip Cycle" in Acts ch. 8. The people of Samaria, with one accord, gave heed to what was said by Philip. The unclean spirits were exorcised and many who were paralysed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city (Acts 8:4-8). The impression created by the above text is that a ministry built around the same pattern as Jesus' Galilean ministry, with the preaching of the Word, with exorcism and healings, was accomplished in Samaria too. The inhabitants of Samaria rejoiced at the formation of a new community. But it was acutely noted that the Spirit was not yet given to the new converts there. Apparently, the ministry of Philip, one of the deacons (Acts 6:5), was not thought of as being able to communicate the Spirit to the converts, for which Peter and John, members of the college of twelve, were brought from Jerusalem. Certainly, Lc writes here as the historian of the institutional church and the spokesman of 'early catholicism'. Similarly, during his third missionary journey Paul met a group of disciples at Ephesus who had been baptised already in the baptism of John the Baptist, but had not received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Confronted with the situation, Paul laid his hands on those Christians and they received the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues (Acts 19:1-7). Both in

Samaria and Ephesus the absence of the Holy Spirit in the communities of the expanding Church was acutely felt as a serious deficiency. Something important was lacking. The Spirit was understood in both episodes as an essential aspect of the Christian experience. Logically this would lead to the conclusion, that where there is no Spirit, there is no full Christian experience.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:4.

It is instructive to observe, according to the understanding of Lc, what happens when the Holy Spirit takes possession of a community. To be sure, the pertinent texts connect some elements of the extraordinary with the presence of the Spirit. The gift of tongues in particular seems to be often associated with the presence of the Spirit, in the Acts (cfr. Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). However, other indications are available as to what the really important effects of the presence of the Spirit are. According to 4:31, the Spirit made the Apostles speak the Word of God with boldness. In the context of the breaking of the Word of the Gospel to the Gentile world, and in the face of stern opposition from the Jews, the Apostles were themselves filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:48-52). What they immediately did was to enter together into the Jewish synagogue and speak in such a way that a great company believed. The Spirit of God enabled the announcers of the Gospel to preach the Word forcefully in spite of opposition. At the laying of hands of Ananias, Paul was to become "a chosen instrument to carry the Lord's name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Immediately after receiving the Holy Spirit, Paul proclaimed Jesus, saying, "he is the son of God" (9:20). Once he received the Holy Spirit, "Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews... by proving that Jesus was the Christ" (9:22). In all these examples the Spirit the Apostles received seems to be the Spirit for proclaiming the Word of God "with courage and with power".

Having seen from the above texts in the Acts of the Apostles that the effect of the Spirit is not to be identified with the gift of tongues, let us examine Acts 2:4ff once more to identify further what the Spirit of God can bring about in a community. To make this clear it is revealing to note the se-

quence of events in the Acts. On the day of Pentecost all those who were assembled received the gift of the Spirit. About three thousand people were baptised on that day. What is immediately reported of them assumes great importance in this regard. Those who were baptised on that day and thus received the gift of the Spirit are said to have formed a community in which they:

- 1) devoted themselves – to the Apostles, teaching and fellowship
– to the breaking of bread and to prayers
v. 42
- 2) lived together 44
- 3) had all things in common 44
- 4) sold their possessions and distributed them to all 45
- 5) attended the temple day by day 46
- 6) broke bread in their homes 46
- 7) partook of food with glad and generous hearts 46
- 8) praised the Lord 47
- 9) found favour with all the people 47.

Parallelism to 2:37ff, a description of the community of the time immediately follows the second mention of the gift of the Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles in 4:31. The following elements can be identified in the description of the community.

- 1) The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul 4:32
- 2) No one claimed the ownership of things he possessed 32
- 3) They had everything in common 32
- 4) There was not a needy person among them 34
- 5) Those who possessed lands or houses sold them and placed the proceeds at the Apostles' feet 34, 35
- 6) Distribution was made to each as any had need 35

The sequence of events recorded in the two texts mentioned above is to be positively valued as an important aid to interpretation. Certainly, we have here a picture of a Christian community idealised by Lc, so idealised that it was not known to have been experimented with, in that form, in the subsequent period. However, the idealised picture is a very powerful indicator of Lc's theological reflection on the effect of the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Christian community. There, the Spirit

establishes a powerful bond of fellowship among those who received Him, so that they acted in complete harmony and accord. The Spirit seems to have given the community its basic sense of unity, in which all the members were incorporated on an equal level of commitment. Such a unity, a rarity in Israel, became a matter of everyday experience and a common patrimony among the Christians, once they were given the gift of the Spirit. Further, the Spirit establishes a steadfast perseverance in the teaching of the Apostles. With the devotion shown in the breaking of bread at home with glad and generous hearts they became conveyers of the Spirit. Like the early disciples (cfr. Lc 5:11, 28) they left everything behind "for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ" (Phil 3:8). Their leaving everything behind acquired a new communitarian dimension as they placed the proceeds of what was sold at the Apostles' feet, and distribution was made to each according to his need. The early theological conception (Gal. 4:6) was that it is the Spirit that enables a believer to call out "Abba Father" and praise Him. Just as the child Jesus, born of the action of the Holy Spirit, increased in wisdom and in favour with God and man (Lc 2:52), so the early church, born of the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff), found favour with all the people because of the same Spirit. By establishing such a sequence of events following the first two references to the outpouring of the Spirit upon the first community, Lc seems to be indicating the transforming effect of the presence of the Spirit in Christian communities. The power of the Spirit alone was enough to establish such a community order. His presence cannot but transform Christian communities.

The effect of the presence of the Spirit in the new community appears to be parallel to the presence of the Creative Spirit at the beginning of the universe. In the beginning as God created the heavens and the earth, the Spirit of God (the storm of God, von Rad) was hovering over the face of waters (Gen. 1:2 cfr. also Dan. 7:2). It should be noted that the opening words of the Books of Moses are selective in the extreme. Hence the mention of the Spirit in that section acquires extraordinary importance in so far as it is a powerful witness to the faith of Israel that the Spirit was operative right at the beginning of creation, of salvation history. There the Spirit is set against the prevailing chaos and formlessness. The Spirit does not itself cre-

ate, but is the agent that gives shape to the "formless waste". It is the Spirit that brings about order, form and life in a situation that is 'tohuwabohu'. The theology of the verse moves primarily between chaos and the cosmos. Such a description is free of any mythological context, but expresses the faith of the theologian of the Pentateuch that the Spirit brings about paradise from a stage in which chaos reigned.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Lc 4:16 ff.

This text concentrates on the endowment of the Leader with the Spirit, from whom it flows to the members of the group. As the leader, so the community. What the leader was becomes the energy for the members to act. In the theology of Lc, Jesus inaugurates his ministry with a programmatic speech in which he solemnly affirms that "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me...." (Lc 4:18). In considering the text, we are interested only in establishing the relationship between the endowment of the Spirit of the Lord for the servant and the liberating activity that he is engaged in. Lc 4:16f is a direct quotation from Is 61:1ff. The understanding of the text in Lc 4:16 ff is greatly determined by its Isaian background.

'Isaiah' whose activities and theological reflection should be extended to the greater part of the restoration period, gives a developed theology of the Spirit. In Isaiah, the restoration has to come about through the leader of the community known as the Scion of David (11:1), the Servant (42:1) and the Prophet (61:1). The restoration activity was thought of as concentrated in the leader, the effect of which would then flow into the community. According to Is. 11:1 ff, at a time when the family of David was condemned to ruin, a new shoot would come forth from the root stump of Jesse. Just as David was chosen miraculously (1 Sam 16:1-13; 2 Sam 7:18) the new shoot too comes into existence through the intervention of Yahweh. Apparently, the distinctive feature of the new David is that the "Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him". The newness consists in the fact that He will be equipped with the Spirit of the Lord. The effect of the new situation, following the leader's receiving the gift of the Spirit is set under three heads:

1. The new leader of restoration will not be like the earlier davidic kings who displeased Yahweh, but will take delight

in fearing the Lord, in having the right attitude towards God. (11:3)

2. The Spirit-endowed new leader will reinstate the original peace and harmony that existed in paradise, as a result of which the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the kid etc. (11:6 ff)
3. The greatest aspect of the restoration appears to be the establishment of righteousness, a duty heavily neglected during the reign of the earlier davidic kings. The spirit puts back the administration of justice in its rightful place, namely, among the offices of the Leader. He will not be a leader dispensing justice by appearance, or hearsay, but shall be the defender of the poor by judging them with righteousness. The Spirit of God enables Him to distinguish between appearance and reality. He will be a devout and righteous king because God himself has given Him His Spirit. (11:3-5)

By judging the cause of the poor, the needy and the dispossessed (cfr. Ps. 72:2) and deciding with equity for the meek of the earth, by slaying the wicked of the earth by the breath of His lips (Is 11:4) the new Scion of David will inaugurate a crisis against the wicked and in favour of the poor of the earth. Thus He becomes the champion of the poor and the needy, the widows and the orphans (cfr. Ps 45:4; 72:4, 12 f; Is 10:2, 32:1). These virtues were expected to be exercised by the Israelite king by virtue of his anointing. God sees that they are exercised, in the days of the restoration, through the gift of his Spirit. This is a new beginning, the beginning of the restoration. The Spirit-endowed Leader stands at the head in this conflict between the wicked and the poor of the earth. Defending the cause of the poor, He acts as the guardian and guarantor of law and justice. The Spirit that acts in Him is the sign that the leader is acting in complete subordination to Yahweh's will, with regard to the poor. To Him is particularly entrusted the cause of the poor and those deprived of their rights, who, but for Him, would find nowhere a helper. Thus He becomes their "breath of life" (Lam 4:20). It is the person of the Spirit-filled Scion of David that

stands at the head of the crisis situation. By His way of life and action He judges the evil existing in this present order. He not only preaches against evil but strives to bring about, a new order of human existence, free from every form of evil.

The Israelite priesthood was the guardian of the cult celebrating the great deeds of Yahweh. On the other hand, the element of the enthusiastic and the violent in Yahwism was regularly associated with Ruah Yahweh. Nevertheless, it would be a perfect miscalculation to understand Yahweh and the Ruah Yahweh as distinct or mutually opposed forces in salvation history. Yahweh was celebrated as the creator and deliverer of the people of God and thus became the centre of the cultic life of the nation. Soon there emerged extensive areas of life where Israel forgot its ties with Yahweh as in espousing the cause of the poor, justice, true cult etc. In such situations Ruah Yahweh, through the medium of the ministries of the Prophets, stood at the centre of the life of the people guiding the process of restoration, constantly subjecting the people to the divine judgment. *Vis-a-vis* all the corruption and lack of true religion, the stirrings of the Spirit through Yahweh's prophets became the only authority mediating between Yahweh and Israel. The aspect of Yahweh's cult, on the one hand, and the call of the prophets to the practising of true religion on the other existed side by side. The cult of Yahweh occupied the centre of Israel, but along with it the war-like, fiery, judicious and conflictual elements of religion sought to safeguard and strengthen that religion. The Ruah Yahweh acted as the principle of purification for the true cult of Yahweh. Thus the Spirit became an absolutely constitutive factor in Israel and not something extrinsic to it.

After the shift in the nature of the Israelite leadership, the prerogative of the Scion of David to have the spirit upon Him, was later transferred to the Servant. In the Servant hymn in Is. 42: 1ff Yahweh declares that He has put His Spirit upon the servant, who will bring forth justice to the nation. Here the Spirit is given in order to enable the Servant to bring forth justice to the nations. The same task of the servant is repeated in v. 3b, and the intervening lines give the way in which the task will have to be accomplished. The approach of Servant

s set in contrast to the military tactics of Cyrus (v. 2). He commissioned especially to administer justice. The Servant's task in Is. 42; 1ff is as follows:

He is to bring forth justice to the nation 1c

He bring forth justice in truth 3c

He will not be discouraged till he has established justice
on earth 4b.

All the three lines contain *Misphat-Krisis*, justice. What is *Misphat*? *Misphat* is a legal decision, executing the divine will. The exercise of that power used to be the duty of kings, priests and magistrates. The fact that the leaders of the renewed community begin to be strongly associated both with the *Ruah* and Justice adds a new dimension to our understanding of the relationship between the Spirit of God and the administration of God's justice on earth. The Servant brings about God's justice through a *via dolorosa*, by walking a road of suffering: "He will not cry or lift up his voice" (42: 2). He accomplishes his mission quietly, only trying to transform the people interiorly. Among the accomplishments of the Servant filled with the Spirit, the victory of Justice stands out clearly. Here again the Spirit is not a guarantee for the extraordinary, but the power to bring about what is ethically good.

The hymn in 61:1-3 stands out in clear relief in the context of the restoration of the people of God after the Babylonian captivity. The opening words of 61:1, "The Spirit of God is upon me" are parallel to Is. 42:16: "I have put my spirit upon him". It is also parallel to Michah 3:8: "as for me I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin". Once more the Spirit is given to the prophet to act in a conflictual situation to make known to Israel her transgression and sin against justice. The verb 'anoint' in 61:1 is used in a non-literal and transferred meaning, something like "to give full authorization to announce the Good News. Apart from the present passage, the OT reserves anointing predominantly to the king, who was consequently designated the 'anointed of Yahweh'. In 61:1 the anointing is explicitly attributed to the prophet of the restoration period. Therefore, through the anointing, some

of the powers once invested in the king, are now transferred to the prophet. The commissioning in v. 1 "He has sent me" does not fit in so well with what precedes, since anointing was always for an office that continued as in the case of the king. Hence anointing, in the present context, is more than a loftier substitute for 'sending'.

The title is followed by two verbs, pregnant with meaning, *msh* and *slh*. Anointing was used primarily to signify the physical anointing done to the king and the priest at the time of investiture. Anointing confers the Spirit (1 Sam 10:10; I Sam 16:13). The anointed person shares in the holiness of God through the anointing. But the purpose for which the prophet is said to be anointed in Is. 61:1 is somewhat extraordinary. He is anointed to 'preach the good news to the poor'. This is certainly a development as far as the theology of anointing is concerned. Here the monarchic and priestly anointing takes on the new dimension of the prophetic anointing. Hence the verb *msh* in the text receives the meaning of authorisation for preaching. *slh* means a special call, authorization on the part of the one sending. The commission delegated in Is 61:6 is of the same nature as that given to Moses: "I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people" (Ex. 3: 10), to Gideon "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian" (Judg. 6: 14), to Jeremiah "to all to whom I send you, you shall go" (Jerem. 1:7). The activities of Moses, Gideon and Jeremiah had all the goal of liberation of peoples who were in bondage. In short, the authorization for preaching and the deputation for liberating the peoples are the two prerogatives that flow from anointing by the Spirit.

The background history of the attribution of the Spirit to the leaders in the OT is very revealing in this respect. Moses is regarded as the greatest of the Israelite prophets, but he is not said to have the Spirit upon him. He belongs to the foundation period. It is revealing to note that in the pentateuchal history, the period of Yahweh's dealing with the Patriarchs and His action of delivering the people were profusely celebrated, the place of the Spirit of God in the life of Israel did not come very much to the fore. The celebration of the activities of the

Spirit of God in the life of the people belongs to the subsequent period of the Judges and the Prophets. The Spirit in this later period was nowhere thought of as the creator Spirit nor as a Spirit of deliverance, but as the Spirit of Prophecy, the Spirit that was re-creating the world through the ministries of His prophets. The Spirit in this period was understood as the Spirit of consolidation, the Spirit of internal purification, the Spirit of judgment from within. That Spirit subjected the people to crises so as to deliver them from evil and sin. The ministries of the Spirit-filled prophets almost always created a split within the nation by judiciously separating those who practised justice from those who spurned the justice of God while glorying in their membership in Israel. Analogously in the NT, once the basic creed of the creative activity of the Spirit was indicated (Mt. 1: 18; Lc 1:35), the Spirit was more often celebrated as being operative in the ethical order, like assisting Jesus to conquer the onslaughts of Satan, giving Him the power that establishes justice to the oppressed, imparting the power that enables Jesus to announce the Good News to the poor and the year that is acceptable to the Lord, bestowing the force that liberates the sick and the oppressed.

The leaders during the time of Judges and the early prophets like Samuel and Elijah and the members of Nebim group were certainly charismatic. Seized by the power of the Spirit, they were drawn into the sphere of the miraculous and this made them powerful in word and deed. The power exercised in their word and deed became the self-authenticating guarantee of their mission which made all the other forms of guarantee superfluous. The Spirit made them powerful mediators of divine will and judgment in situations that were oppressive to the poor, the needy and the outcast. Through their word and deed the prophets became helpers of the people and not mere miracle-mongers.

In the case of kings Saul and David, their anointing was accompanied by a coming of the Spirit (1 Sam 10:10; 16:13), although this aspect of the reigning king having the Spirit of God upon him did not gain any prominence in the theology of anointing among Israel. One also notices the fact that the great

prophets of Israel never claimed that the Spirit of the Lord was upon them. They normally avoided making appeal to the endowment with the Spirit, in opposition to the Nebim, the fiery enthusiasts from whom they considered themselves different. Some of these great men broke away from the frame-work of the official leadership or never stood with them. Some proceeded to stronger and uncompromising attacks on the evil existing in the institutions. Their polemics against the evil conditions existing among the people and their leaders naturally started off a series of disturbances. These spirit-filled prophets never spared words in reproaching the holders of high offices, kings, priests and official prophets and admonished them to comply with the will of Yahweh. Thus they became, in the context of the restoration of Israel, the "signs of contradiction".

Right at a time when restoration of the people of God after captivity was thought imminent, when prophecy was taken up at the hands of Trito-Isaiah, when a fresh start was visible, the prophet is aware that he is given the Spirit of Yahweh to bring good tidings to the poor. His proclamation is destined to heal wounds, to bring liberty to the captives. Liberation of the captives does not merely mean those who were led into exile, but, as in 58:6, also people who were put in prison for debt. Depending on the verb 'send' are six infinitives expressing the purpose for which the prophet is endowed with the Spirit: bring, proclaim, declare, bind up, comfort and give. All that the prophet is required to do seems to be to speak. Nevertheless he is not a mere spectator of history, but creator of it. In and through the proclaiming of Good News, the Prophet is to bring about a change in those to whom he is sent. For the Prophet to proclaim salvation is to bring it into existence. It is a new era that is described, as is evident from the use of 'day' and 'year' in the hymn.

The text of Is. 61:1ff has the distinction of being the last one in which a Prophet experienced the certainty of having been sent by God with a message to His nation, with such freedom and firmness. At that period the theological reflection had reached the firm conviction that the Spirit of God was necessary for the accomplishment of any redemptive work, for

any work connected with the restoration of the chosen community. The work undertaken by the prophet in the power of the Spirit, seems, by its very nature, to cause tension in the community, as the prophetic invitation to do justice is by itself a form of divine judgement upon the injustices practised in the nation.

In applying the prophecy of Is. 61 : 1 to himself in Lc 4 : 18ff, Jesus is declaring that the longed-for age of salvation has now become a matter of present experience. The presence of Ruah Yahweh on Jesus was the pledge of the nearness of the new age, the age of salvation. The presence of the Spirit on Jesus was the clearest sign that through him God was visiting his people (Lc 7 : 16; 19 : 44). Through the liberating activity the Spirit makes the justice of Yahweh available to all those who are oppressed. The Spirit is the spirit of liberation. For the people, the power of the Spirit working in Jesus was a sign that Jesus was the prophet sent by God for their liberation. These christological considerations remain the ever valid guidelines for our understanding of the working of the Spirit in our times.

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Blood and Water

“One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” (Jn 19:34). The piercing of the side of Jesus on the Cross and the consequent coming out of blood and water are symbolically and theologically very significant. John’s whole narrative of the Passion is symbolical and theological in its presentation and each episode in it shares these characteristics. This is all the more true of this episode, which closes the series of events on the Cross. The following is an attempt to bring out the symbolical and theological significance of this event examined in the whole Johannine background.

The historicity of the episode

We have no confirmation of this detail from the Synoptic tradition. Even Lk 24:39, which mentions wounds in Jesus hands and feet, is silent about a wound in the side. Nevertheless, there is nothing intrinsically improbable about the probing of an apparent corpse to see if death has really taken place, especially if the death is premature.

The surprising detail is the insistence that blood and water flowed from the dead body of Jesus. It is commonly accepted that dead bodies do not bleed since the heart is no longer pumping blood through the system. However, most physicians, who have studied the question, do not find the bleeding so great a difficulty, for a flow of pent-up blood through a wound received shortly after death is not unheard of, especially from a corpse that is in a vertical position.¹

The real difficulty centres on the flow of water from the corpse. Even if we accept the common suggestion that ‘water’ is the popular description of a colourless or nearly colourless

1) Cf. P. Barbet, – *A Doctor at Calvary*, N. Y., 1953, 113–127; A. F. Sava, “The Wound in the side of Christ” *cbq* 19 (1957), 343–346.

bodily fluid, namely, serum, it is hard to conceive why the blood and this fluid were so sharply separated. There are several explanations given by physicians pointing to different possibilities of such a happening.² Anyway, in the light of medical discussions, of this kind we can conclude that such a natural phenomenon cannot be ruled out and therefore the description of John enjoys historical plausibility.

The absence of the testimony of eye-witnesses also remains a serious argument that John simply invented the incident of the blood and water for theological purposes. It is all the more so if we accept the opinion that the parenthetical v. 35 does not stem from the evangelist, but from a redactor who did not know that the evangelist had invented the scene. While we recognise the difficulty of taking John's description at face value, it seems more plausible to take it as such than to judge that the description is fictitious and deliberately supported by a false testimony. "If we may judge from the character of John's Gospel as a whole, it seems unlikely that John is simply manufacturing an event for the sake of its allegorical significance."³

The theological symbolism

After having discussed the historicity of the incident we now turn to the question of the interpretation of it. There are authors who explain the scene from a purely apologetic perspective.⁴ Though certain apologetic motivations could be suggested, John's purpose in presenting this scene is not purely derived from them. In v. 35 he insists that this incident is being reported in order to deepen existing Christian faith: "He who saw it has borne witness - his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth - that you also may believe."

2) Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII - XXI*, New York 1970, 946-947.

3) Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, London, 1962 461; C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge, 1965, 135.

4) Cf. R. E. Brown, op. cit., 948-949; D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* London, 1956, 325-329.

The particle 'also' suggests that the eyewitness himself is a believer and wishes by his testimony to ensure that the readers of the Gospel are also believers. The verb 'to believe' is in the present subjunctive and it implies a continuation and deepening of faith rather than a conversion. The immediate object of the faith involves the death of Jesus on the Cross and its effects – a truth in which is subsumed the whole revelation of Jesus. The readers are asked to have faith not only in what the eyewitness saw, but also in its theological implications.

The reference to the testimony concerning the blood and water as 'true' (alethinos) also indicates that the real significance of the scene is not on the visible or material level, but in what it tells us of the world of the Spirit. 'Alethinos' implies the sense of 'the only real' as compared with other worldly realities. In John it is used in a contrast between the heavenly and the earthly, or between the NT reality and the OT type. Thus in Jn 1:9 Jesus is the 'real' light while John the Baptist is not. In Jn 6:32 Jesus' revelation and the Eucharist is the real bread from heaven contrasted with the manna in the desert. In Jn 15:1 Jesus is the real vine contrasted with Israel of the O. T. So here also the term 'true' implies that the testimony is about the significance of the event for the believer rather than about the event itself.

The one who testifies is the 'Beloved Disciple' of vv. 26–27 in the same chapter. That also points to the revelatory significance of this testimony. In vv. 26–27 he is identified with the person in the revelatory formula "Behold your son" and hence symbolizes all Christians. Therefore here he speaks as a witness to a revelation that is important for all Christians whom he symbolizes. Hence we have every reason to search for a profound theological symbolism in the flow of blood and water.

Water: the symbol of the Spirit

The key to the meaning of the theological symbolism seems to lie within the Johannine writings themselves. In Jn 7:38–39 Jesus, inviting the people to come to him and drink, quotes Scripture passage: "as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water". Text critical analysis favours the interpretation that here Jesus, and not the believer, is meant

when it is said 'out of his hearts'.⁵ The Evangelist there makes the remark that by 'water' Jesus was referring to the Spirit which those who believed in Jesus were to receive, for as of yet there was no Spirit since Jesus had not been glorified (Jn 7:39). So, against the OT background, in Jn 7:37-39 Jesus was presented as the new Temple,⁶ or the Spiritual Rock⁷ from whom the Water, namely, the Spirit flows, after His glorification. In this connection it is interesting to note that in later Jewish thought, as exemplified in Midrash Rabbah 3:13 on Exod 4:9, it was held that Moses struck the rock twice because first there came forth blood and then water. With all this background it is most probable that in this flow of water from the side of Jesus (from within him) John sees the fulfilment of Jesus' own prophecy, taking place in the hour of Jesus' glorification. The parenthetical v. 35 triumphantly insists that this really happened just as Jesus had predicted and that there was an eyewitness to affirm it. So for John the flowing of water is a symbol of the giving of the Spirit as a result of His glorification through death and resurrection.

Blood: symbol of the redemptive death of Jesus

To understand the symbolism of the Blood we should probably turn to 1 Jn 5:6-8: "Jesus Christ is the one who came through water and blood,—not in water only, but in water and blood. And it is the Spirit that testifies to this, for the Spirit is truth. Thus there are three who testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three are of one accord." The association of the terms like 'blood', 'water', 'spirit' and 'testimony' in this text is certainly an indication that here we have something in common with Jn. 19:34-35. In 1 Jn 5:6-8 scholars usually see a contrast between the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and the crucifixion. Baptism by the Baptist did not convey the Spirit, for he baptized only in water (Jn 1:31). The real begetting by water and Spirit (Jn 3:5) was something that would not come until Jesus had been glorified (Jn 7:39). The Spirit

5) Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John, I-XII*, New York, 1966, 320-324.

6) Eze 47:12; Zach 14:11; Rev. 22:2-3.

7) Ps 78:15-16; Is 43:20; 44:3; 48:21; Dt 8:15; 1 Cor 10:4.

would not be able to come until Jesus had departed (Jn 16:7), namely, until He had shed His blood. In the poetic presentation of the First Epistle of John the water had to be mingled with Jesus' blood, before the Spirit could give testimony. Thus it would seem that in the Gospel picture of a flow of 'blood and water' from the side of Jesus, John is saying that now the Spirit can be given because Jesus is obviously dead and through death has regained the glory that was His before the world existed (Jn 17:5). So the 'blood' refers to the redemptive death of Jesus which was an essential part of Jesus' glorification, through which the Spirit was made available to the believer.

The Spirit flows from the process of glorification

The flowing out of blood and water, as we have seen above, symbolizes the giving of the Spirit as a result of Jesus' glorification. The actual giving, however, is to be realized only after the resurrection of Jesus (Jn 20:22). The symbolism is, therefore, proleptic, and serves to clarify that, while only the risen Jesus gives the Spirit, that gift flows from the whole process of glorification in "the hour" of the passion, death, resurrection and ascension.

'He gave up his Spirit' (19:30)

The same idea is expressed also in the scene that immediately precedes, where we read: "and he bowed his head and gave up his Spirit" (Jn 19:30). When we compare it with the Synoptics we note the following differences in the wording:

Mk 15:37 "He breathed his last (ekpnein)"

Mt 27:50 "He yielded his spirit (aphienai)"

Lk 23:46 "He breathed his last (ekpnein)"

Jn 19:30 "He gave up his spirit" (paradidonai)

When Mk and Lk make use of the word 'ekpnein', Mt uses 'aphienai' and Jn uses 'paradidonai'. Lk, before referring to the death of Jesus, speaks of Jesus' prayer: "Father into thy hands I commit my spirit". The word used here is 'paratitemi' and he specifies that it was into his Father's hands that Jesus committed his spirit. John, unlike all the other Evangelists, uses the word

‘paradidonai’ which implies a voluntary giving⁸. Besides, John does not identify a recipient of the spirit of Jesus. So John seems to play upon the idea that Jesus handed over the Holy Spirit to those who were at the foot of the Cross, in particular, to his mother who symbolizes the Church or new people of God⁹ and to the Beloved Disciple who symbolizes the Christian. Thus once again we have here a symbolic reference to the giving of the Spirit as a result of the whole process of glorification involving the death of Jesus. The gift of the Spirit was made possible by the life of Jesus given in sacrifice for men.

Spirit: the gift of Jesus bearing wounds (Jn 20: 19-23)

After the resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples and breathed on them and said to them “Receive the Holy Spirit...” (v. 22). This is the Johannine Pentecost. The breathing forth of the Spirit is, for John, the high point of the post-resurrectional activity of Jesus. The earlier part of this Chapter has already prepared for this dramatic event in several ways. The association of the resurrection with the ascension in v. 17, and the implication that through Jesus’ return to the Father men would become God’s children, points to the work of the Spirit. The reference to Jesus’ side in v. 20 is a reminder of the blood and water that flowed from that side and symbolizes the Spirit. It is worth noting here that John insists on the side of Jesus: “He showed them his hands and his side” (v. 20), while in Lk 24:39 we read: “see my hands and my feet”.

The correspondence between Jesus giving the Spirit and showing them his wounds seems to be intentional. The arrangement of the verses supports this conclusion.

- a v. 19 Now... *Jesus* came... *said to them*: ‘Peace be with you’
- b 20 *When He had said this*
 He showed them His hands and His side.
- c Then the disciples were glad...

8) Cf. J. H. Bernard, *St. John* (ICC), vol. II, Edinburgh, 1963, 641.

9) Cf. M. Vellanickal “The mother of Jesus in the Johannine writings” *Biblehashyam* 3 (1977), 292-294.

a¹ v. 21 *Jesus said to them...* "Peace be with you"...

b¹ 22 *When he had said this*

He breathed on them and said: "Receive the
Holy Spirit

c¹ 23 *If you forgive the sins..."*

In this arrangement vv. 20 and 22 are parallels. Therefore the giving of the Spirit is presented parallel to Jesus' showing of His hands and His side. Thus John wants to make it very clear that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the gift of Jesus who bears wounds. The Spirit that is given to the Church is the Spirit of Jesus who laid down His own life in order to give life to others.

Gift of the Spirit and the power over sin

The giving of the Spirit is accompanied by giving of the power over sin. The nature of this power over sin is interpreted differently by different authors.¹⁰ The disciples who represent the Church can now forgive sins because they are sent as Jesus was sent by the Father and because they are given the Spirit of Jesus. So the power of forgiving and withholding sins should be interpreted in the light of Jesus' own action toward sin. In Jn 9: 39-41 Jesus says that he came into the world for judgement to enable some to see and to cause blindness in others. Deliberate blindness means remaining in sin and willingness to do so despite seeing the results of being delivered from sin. Jn 3: 17-21 describes a separation of those whose lives are good from those whose lives are evil, and this discriminatory process is related to the coming of Jesus into the world. It is this same discriminatory process of judgement between good and evil that has to continue now through the disciples of Jesus who live by his Spirit. As Jesus' life was a struggle with the prince of this world, and the casting out or condemnation of the ruler of this world implied 'lifting up' or the glorification of Jesus through death and resurrection, the life of the Church (the disciples) in his Spirit is also to be a life of constant struggle against the power of evil and of victory over it as they realize in their lives the process of glorification – death and resurrection.

10) For the different interpretations, Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, vol. II, 1039-1045.

Life in the Spirit and the struggle against the sinful world

The life in the Spirit is, therefore, a life of struggle and fight against sin, in whatever form it appears, in our lives or in the lives of others, in individuals or in society. The fact that the one who lives by the Spirit is confronted with this discriminatory process is very well expressed in some of the Paraclete passages.

The Spirit and the world

Already in Jn 14:17 the relation between the Spirit and the world is presented. There it is said that the world cannot accept the Spirit since it neither sees nor recognizes Him. In Chapter 15 it becomes clear that this failure to see the Spirit does not result in indifference but in hostility, the same type of hostility that marked the relationship of the world to Jesus.

This hostility between the world and the disciples of Jesus is presented graphically in this context: "If the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you... If they persecuted me, they will persecute you..." (Jn 15:18-20). Those who live by the Spirit of Christ, can never compromise with the world. Their life is essentially a life of struggle against the world of sin or the unbelieving world. Jesus makes clear that the world's hatred of the Christian is not a passing phenomenon. Hatred is just as much of the essence of the world as love is the essence of the Christian. The world is opposed to God and His revelation. It can never have anything but hatred for those who recognize that revelation in His Son.

Not escape but confrontation

The idea is not that Christians should withdraw from the sinful elements of the unbelieving world. Rather they shall be bearers of the Word of God and thus stand in dualistic opposition to the world. This is explicitly stated in Jn 17:14 "I have given to them your Word, and the world has hated them be-

cause they do not belong to the world, any more than I belong to the world."

The testimony of the Spirit

In this confrontation the Christian disciple is not to be a passive victim. The Spirit dwells within him (Jn 14:17), and he is to give voice to the Spirit's witness against the world. "But when the Counsellor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses" (Jn 15:26-27). This aggressive witness-bearing will produce further hostility on the world's part: "I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away...; indeed the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me." (Jn 16:1-3). The Paraclete represents Jesus' presence among men. In hating the disciples who are the dwelling place of the Spirit, the world is striking at Jesus' continued presence on earth. Through the Spirit's indwelling, the disciples represent Jesus against the world.

The witness of the Spirit (15:26) and the witness of the disciples (15:27) are not two separate witnesses. The Spirit is invisible to the world, so that the only way His witness can be heard is through the witness of the Christians who live by Him. The witness of the Spirit and the witness of Christians stand in relation to each other much in the same way that the witness of the Father is related to the witness of the Son.

The object of the testimony

Jn 15:26-27 hints at the object of witness borne by the Spirit through the disciples: "...He will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning." The disciples are the unique witnesses because they have been with Jesus, and it is His word that must be brought to the world. This is in agreement with what Jesus says of the Paraclete in Jn 14:26: "He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." In Jn 16:13-14 Jesus says: "He will not speak on His own... It is from me that He will receive what He will declare to you." Jesus is the supreme revelation of God to men. There can be no witness to

the world other than the witness He bore. So the witness of the Spirit through the disciples simply interprets that.

The Spirit will prove the world wrong

The confrontation and struggle against the world results in a note of triumph on the part of the Spirit and the Christians. This is expressed in Jn 16:8-11. "When he (the Paraclete) comes, he will prove the world wrong of sin and of righteousness and of judgement; of sin because they do not believe in me; of righteousness because I go to the Father..., of judgement, because the ruler of this world is judged." The proof of the world's guilt is taking place in the Christian disciples and the forum is internal. Therefore the trial is only indirectly a trial of the world. It is properly a re-enactment of the trial of Jesus in which the Spirit makes the Truth emerge for the Christian to see. Its effect on the world consists in the fact that, having been assured by the Spirit of the victory of Jesus in that trial, the Christian goes forth to bear witness (Jn 15:27) and thus challenges the world and its interpretation of the trial.

The first element of this activity of the Spirit is to prove to the disciples that the world is guilty of sin, the basic sin which consists in refusing to believe in Jesus (v. 9). The second element is to prove the world wrong about righteousness by showing that Jesus whom it adjudged guilty, was really innocent and righteous, based on God's vindication of Jesus through Jesus' exaltation. The return to the Father was God's approval of the righteousness manifested in the life and death of Jesus. The third element in this activity of the Spirit is to prove that in condemning Jesus the world itself was judged. In Jesus' death on the Cross, the trial that lasted throughout his ministry seemed to end with the victory of His enemies. But Jesus has come out of it as the living Spirit, victorious over death. This implies the victory won over the prince of this world. So Jesus' victory over death implies that Satan has been condemned and has lost his power over the world.

The above analysis shows that the life in the Spirit is a real struggle against the world of sin in whatever form it appears. Though the final victory is assured, it is a victory that

costs a life-long struggle as illustrated in the case of Jesus. The Spirit, who is at work in the Christian, is the Spirit of Jesus who passed through the whole process of glorification. Hence the life in the Spirit implies a re-enactment of the same process in the life of a christian confronting the sinful world.

Birth into the life in the Spirit: conversion

In the dialogue of Jesus with Nicodemus in Jn 3, the beginning of the life in the Spirit is referred to in terms of a 'birth from water and Spirit' (Jn 3:5). Here 'water' refers to baptism and thus the birth out of the Spirit is identified with the initiation into Christian life through baptism.¹¹ So the Christian life is a life in the Spirit and the starting-point is qualified as a birth from the Spirit. 'Birth from the Spirit' is presented here as a condition for entering the Kingdom of God.

The problem of 'entering the Kingdom of God' is dealt with also in the Synoptic Gospels. Therefore the Synoptic Gospels will help us to understand the nature of this 'birth from the Spirit'. The parallel texts are given below for comparison: Mt 18:3 "Unless *you be converted*... you shall not enter into the Kingdom." Jn 3:5 "Unless one *is born of... the Spirit* he shall not enter the Kingdom..." The above comparison shows that birth from the Spirit implies a conversion in life.¹² Man is naturally turned to sin. Therefore it is quite natural that one who enters the life in the Spirit, a life of victorious struggle with the world of sin, is already decisively turned away (converted) from sin. The baptismal experience has to effect, in the Christian, a real conversion to the side of Christ, thus preparing him for the life of struggle against the world of sin with the help of the Spirit of Christ. It involves a real death to sin and resurrection to life in Christ.

"Go, call your husband" (Jn 4:16)

The same idea is expressed in the dialogue of Jesus with the Samaritan woman in Jn 4. Jesus convinced her of the

11) Cf. M. Vellanickal, "Christian: Born of the Spirit," *Biblehashyam* 2 (1976), 162-165.

12) For a detailed study of this aspect, cf. M. Vellanickal, "Christian Born of the Spirit," *Biblehashyam* 2 (1976), 158-162.

necessity of possessing the living water – the Spirit – in order to have eternal life (Jn 4:13–14). A sincere desire arose in her to possess this living water, to enter into this life in the Spirit and she said: “Sir, give me this water” (Jn 4:15). But Jesus tells her to go and call her husband and come (4:16). Thereby Jesus makes her understand that the life in the Spirit is not possible unless she is converted from her sinful ways.

The Spirit and the mission of Jesus

The Spirit in the life of Jesus, and in the life of the disciples is operative, in view of the mission of Jesus. In Jn 1: 29–34 John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29). In view of fulfilling this mission the Spirit descends upon Him in the form of a dove. The form of a dove is symbolic of the mission of Jesus in view of which the Spirit is given. In the background of the dove of the deluge (Gen. 8:8) the Spirit descends on Jesus to fulfil his mission of establishing peace and reconciliation between God and man and between man and man. In the background of the rabbinic texts, presenting the Spirit of God at work in creation as the dove, the Spirit descends on Jesus to give birth to the new creation (Is 11:1–9). In the background of the OT presentation of the people of God as a dove,¹³ the Spirit descends on Jesus so that He may realize His mission of giving existence to the new people of God.

Whatever it is, the mission of Jesus was to take away the sins of the world, liberating humanity from sin and its consequences, and to bring about a revolutionary change by establishing a new humanity where truth, justice and love abide. The Spirit was at work in Jesus to bring this mission to fulfilment. Hence his whole life was a struggle and fight against the world of sin, and a victory over it.

The same mission of Jesus is continued by the disciples and to fulfil it, they are given the Spirit: “As the father sent me forth, so I send you. When He said this He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’...” (Jn 20: 21–22). So

13) Hos 7:11; 11:11; Is 60:8; Cant 2: 14; 5: 2; 6: 9.

the Spirit is operative in the Church (Christian disciples) in so far as it brings about the new humanity by means of a struggle and fight against the sinful and oppressive elements in the world.

Conclusion

The above analysis of the Johannine doctrine on the nature of the Spirit and those who live by the Spirit brings out a particular aspect of the Spirit which is lost sight of in the contemporary discussions on Him and His work in the believers. The Holy spirit is the Spirit of Jesus who was engaged in a life-long struggle against the power of evil or sin that introduces all sorts of alienation in the world: spiritual, psychological, moral, sociological etc. Jesus won this fight of liberating man from every alienation but it cost Him His life. It is this liberating Spirit that is communicated to the disciples of Jesus, to all Christians. Hence life in the Spirit is not a soft and sweet one but a life of bitter struggle against all kinds of alienations that enslave the man of today. It is a life that looks forward to the day of the Resurrection, but after passing through the Good Friday of death. It is a life of joy that is the result of the anguish and sorrow involved in the process of birth of redeemed humanity.

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The New-Creative Spirit

The meaning of incarnational religion is the wedding of matter to the Spirit. The world is not apart from God, nor is God apart from the world. Mankind was created for God, and the earth was created for mankind, so that they might transform it in the power of the Spirit, and bring about the new earth where God would dwell with them. This process of transformation was to begin with the very first human beings.

Our Covenant Destiny

Human beings themselves are the crucial factor in this divine plan. It is in union with God that we must work out our destiny. This is the Biblical idea of the Covenant. From the beginning of our history God has chosen to dwell with mankind, and to be fully involved in our life and all our activity; and His plan remains unchanged in spite of all lapses on our part: see Rev. 21 : 3f.

Our personal and social transformation is involved in the idea of our dwelling with God. The God-intended Covenant means that mankind are invited to rise above the powers of their own human nature. Left to ourselves, we are incapable of sharing in the personal life of the triune God. Natural man is necessarily on the creaturely level; he is not where God is; he does not belong in the fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Hence the Covenant must mean that God *communicates Himself* to us and lifts us up to Himself. In the divine sphere of the life-together, man's own spirit cannot be his guide. Our covenant-destiny means that God gives us a new life-principle, a new guide. This is none other than the personal mediating principle between Father and Son, namely, the Holy Spirit. Only in the power of the Spirit can we listen to God's Word, and be transformed into the image of His children. To all those who received God's Word He gave the power of His Spirit by which they became the children of God: see Jn. 1 : 12.

The Covenant and New Creation and human failure

Our destiny is therefore *to be assimilated to God*, to be transfigured or divinized into the image of God through new creation by the Spirit, through inclusion in the only-begotten Son. In God's plan, human beings, transformed into God's own image, enjoying the dignity of God's own children, invested with the unlimited powers and resources that belong to that status, were to be *the agents of the transformation of our earth*. This earth of ours was to be turned into Paradise through all mankind living with God and operating in the power of His Spirit.

All through the course of history God's project of new-man and new-earth has suffered many a set-back through the lack of response and co-operation on our part. Human beings have not become God's children, living in the power of His Spirit. As a family, we have not yet entered upon the liberty and splendour that belong by right to God's children. Consequently we could not exercise that *dominion over material creation* which God wanted us to have: Gen. 1:28. Nature will not obey us when we refuse to obey the Creator. As a result, the whole of our world has been groaning in all its parts as if in the pangs of childbirth. We ourselves, subject to slavery of various kinds induced by our false declaration of independence from God, have been groaning inwardly, and all creation with us. Still we are not without hope, because God's plan of new creation remains unchanged, and He has set us free by sending His Son into the world as our Redeemer, and by sending His Spirit into our hearts to renew His call to us: Rom. 8:18f.

The revolutionary Spirit

In the Old Testament the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit denotes *God at work* in individual human beings, in the people as a whole, and in the world. Where the Spirit's activity is received, revolutionary consequences follow. In the Book of Genesis *Joseph* is described as a man in whom was the Spirit of God (41:38). The result of his accepting the guidance of the Spirit in the midst of his incredible trials was that he understood and accepted the Good News of God's liberating love in his life long before the historical coming of Jesus Christ. He had been seriously wronged by his brothers, but he did not believe in revenge, in repaying evil for evil, but only considered what was

just and noble in the sight of God: Gen. 45:4f, He overcame evil with good by cleverly working towards the repentance of his brothers, and leading them to reconciliation with himself and with God.

In the time of the Judges, *Gideon*, of the tribe of Manasseh, was the least in his family, a member of an insignificant clan; he had no confidence in himself. But when the Spirit of the Lord took possession of him, he readily accepted the hitherto hopeless task of liberating his people from the oppression of their enemies. Strong in the Spirit, he mobilized four tribes of Israel, and reduced his army from 32,000 to 300 in order to signify his entire dependence on God. Following closely the counsel of the Spirit, he defeated the enemy utterly in a sudden night attack which demoralised them: Jud. 6.

All the glorious achievements of *David* as king and poet are attributed to the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord who came mightily upon him when he was anointed by Samuel in the midst of his brothers: 1 Sam. 16:13. The narrative suggests that this is why he ruled justly over men, ruling in the fear of God. He dawned on his people like the morning light, like the sun shining forth upon a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth. Consequently his house stood secure with God, and was to be blessed for ever: II Sam. 23:2f.

The Old Testament interprets the life of the whole people of Israel in terms of God's gift of his Spirit to them. As God led His people through the years of their life in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt, He gave His good Spirit to instruct them. When the people rebelled against God, acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck, and defied God's law, He bore with them, and warned them by His Spirit through His prophets: Neh. 9:20-30.

What God did for the people through the mission of Moses was to put His holy Spirit in the midst of them. The mighty acts of God were the manifestations of His Spirit. God is described as lifting up the people and carrying them all the days of their history. It was the Spirit of the Lord that gave

them deliverance and rest from all their troubles. Still the people hardened their hearts, rebelled against God, and grieved His holy Spirit, thus postponing indefinitely the realization of the new earth: Is. 63 : 7-19.

Obviously there is continuity between this idea of the Spirit's activity in the Israelite community and what is said about the work of the holy Spirit in the life of the Christian community. Here the Spirit is characterized as the Advocate or Helper who is with the faithful and is within them: Jn. 14: 16, 26f. Indwelling in them, He becomes the source of their life of peace, their strength, their love, their hope: Rom. 8 : 11f. The Spirit is sent into the hearts of the faithful; He gives them the consciousness of being the beloved children of God, and enables them to pass from the dark world of sin to the luminous world of Christ: Gal. 4 : 1 f.

The unconfined activity of the Spirit

Given the Covenant, human beings could attain their destiny only through fidelity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Receiving His assistance is therefore not optional. *All sin* is essentially the refusal of the Spirit's guidance, and the wrong assertion of self. It means turning a deaf ear to the voice of the Spirit within oneself amid the clamour of other voices: see Gen. 3:17.

The Covenant-idea thus implies *the absolute universality of the work of the Spirit*. It is in the Spirit that all things and persons were and are created, and it is in the Spirit that they must be re-created or new-created. According to the more common interpretation of Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God is pictured as presiding over the whole work of creation. In Psalm 104 (103), which is a meditation on God's wonderful working in the world, both creation and the renewal of creation are attributed to the Spirit: verse 30.

In view of this fact one cannot agree with William Barclay when he says: "Great as is the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament, the fact remains that in general the work of the Spirit is connected with the extraordinary and the abnormal.

The work of the Spirit is not so much a daily power and presence as it is an abnormal phenomenon and manifestation.... It is not everyday life with which the Spirit is connected, but with the unrepeatable moments... The work of the Spirit is connected more with the moment of ecstasy than with the daily routine. The manifestations of the Spirit are wonderful and miraculous... In the Old Testament the tendency is for the Spirit to be the privilege of the prophet, and that sometimes, in the moment of ecstasy. The experience of the Spirit is not an experience for the common man or for every day. In the case of the earlier prophets the manifestations of the Spirit tend to be inexplicable and extraordinary and not to be recaptured in life's ordinary routine... The general idea of the Old Testament is that the work of the Spirit is neither for the ordinary man nor for the ordinary occasion, but for the extraordinary man and the abnormal occasion". (*The Promise of the Spirit*, 17-18).

All this must be questioned. The same author says elsewhere in the same book that God never left the world without the Spirit, who is God's agent in the whole work of creation and recreation. It is the power of the Spirit that brought order into the primal chaos; it is the same power that is ever at work in the world restoring order in the chaos created by man's sin and disobedience. Every man needs to be made new: the new-creating power of God's Spirit is actually at work in every person who opens himself or herself to this power. *Such an activity is necessarily universal*, and can suffer no restriction — a fact of capital importance for the evaluation of the different religions of the world. John's statement that "it is not by measure that He (God) gives the Spirit" (3:34) must be universally true. The extraordinary working of the Spirit in select individuals and on particular occasions does not and cannot exclude His ordinary or extraordinary working in every person, ordinary or extraordinary. Nothing in the Old Testament contradicts this truth.

So we can agree with Barclay when he says: "Every sphere of truth that men have made is the work of the Spirit. Nothing could be more wrong than to limit the guidance of the Spirit to what we might call theological truth. Every great poem, every great piece of music, every scientific discovery is the work

of the Spirit. When a surgeon discovers a new operating technique, when a physician discovers a new drug, when an engineer a new way to harness power, all is the work of the Spirit" (ibid. 37). The author goes on to comment that many a time a man may not know that he is being used by the Spirit. But all the same he is the Spirit's agent so far as he is single-minded in his search for truth, and is eager to lessen the toil and alleviate the pain of people. The Spirit may use for His own purpose even persons who are led by wrong motives: God does bring good out of man's evil-doing, as we so often realize in our own experience: see Is. 10: 7f; 41: 25; 45: 4f. This means that the help of the Spirit is nobody's monopoly: in every sphere of truth, in the spheres of our personal, social, economic, political and religious life we are invariably offered the guidance of God's Spirit. That we frequently resist this guidance goes without saying.

The omnipresence of the Spirit's activity follows from the fact that God's Covenant-plan is *cosmic and universal* in its significance. It is quite correct to say that every human being is called to life in the Spirit. Everyone's life is meant to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is ever at work in order to effect this sanctification: see I Thes. 4: 3. 19. If so, there is no life or area of life which is not sacred, which is exempt from the entry and influence of the Holy Spirit. This fact obliges us to question the common division of life into sacred and secular. Just as physical existence is impossible to us without the air we breathe, so the true life of the children of God, to which we are all called, is impossible unless we open ourselves to the breath of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit the source of all true wisdom and goodness

This point could be illustrated by what Exodus says about Bezalel, whom God called by name for the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness: Exod. 31:1-5; 35:31; 36:1. God filled Bezalel with the Holy Spirit, "with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every craft". God also gave him an able assistant. The passage comments that it is God who gives ability to all able men, that they may work according to

God's will. Here it is recognized that all the varied gifts that people have for the service of the common good, are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The conclusion from this is well expressed by Barclay: "It is not only the theologian in his study, the priest in his church, the prophet with his message, who is working in the power of the Spirit; the man at the bench and at the machine, the man in whose hands wood and metal become obedient, the mechanic, the engineer, the carpenter, the fitter, the mason, are all men of the Spirit, and can, and must, serve God in the Spirit" (Ibid. 20).

This view finds further support in what Paul says in I Corinthians 12. All the varieties of gifts by which the members of a community contribute to the common good have their source in the same Spirit. Not only apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle-workers and healers, but also all kinds of helpers and administrators are called to be agents of the Spirit. The community is as much in need of small services as of great services; it cannot do without the people who serve tables, manage finances and attend to all the humdrum details of everyday life. Someone has remarked that there is a place in life for candles as well as stars. The Spirit is the support of all. "Nothing is more certain than without thee there is in man Nothing innocent or whole". (*Veni Sancte Spiritus*)

When we succeed in going out of ourselves, in overcoming our selfish self, in doing what we could not previously dream of, when we surpass ourselves and surprise ourselves, we are lifted up and carried along by the power of the Spirit: "Whoever rights wrongs, feeds the hungry, cares for the dispossessed not merely with enthusiasm but with dogged determination, whoever is meek and poor of heart; whoever is sensitive towards the numerous little heartaches people suffer, is — knowingly or unknowingly — an envoy of Christ. And whoever shares in Christ's mission, shares in the Fire of the Spirit... A parent or teacher who helps youngsters to be sensitive to beauty, who enables them to love truth, to honour sincerity, is also a Paraclete, a light and a fire. Theirs is a humbling task. Light and fire can be transmitted but not handled, possessed, understood. They are essentially the

personal gift of the Spirit" (Peter De Rosa, "Come, Holy Spirit" 60.77).

The *universality* of the Spirit's activity is emphasised in the Book of Wisdom. The Spirit of God *fills the whole world*. It is He who holds all things together: see Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3. He is present to every one, and offers his guidance. He overhears everything, knows every word that is said. Hence anyone who utters injustice will not go unnoticed, nor will the godless man's deliberations escape the Spirit's scrutiny: Wisd. 1:7-10.

The Spirit and the prophets

What the support of the Spirit can enable a person to achieve can be seen in the prophets, who were all men of the Spirit. Ezekiel says that, at the time of his prophetic call, the Spirit entered into him and set him upon his feet, and he was given courage to bring his message to a rebellious people. The Spirit lifted him up and carried him along, so that he was full of exaltation: the hand of the Lord was strong upon him. He came to the exiles at Tel-abib and sat there overwhelmed among them for seven days. The Spirit again entered into him, and gave him courage to continue his mission in spite of most bitter experiences. Elsewhere he says that the Spirit lifted him up between earth and heaven, and brought him in a vision to Jerusalem, and later into Chaldea: chapters 2; 3; 11.

He realized that there was nothing the Spirit of God could not do for the people, no matter how distressful and desperate their present situation was. They had dealt treacherously with their God, and God had hid His face from them, and given them into the hands of their adversaries, and they had gone into exile or fallen by the sword. Ezekiel had a vision in which he saw the present state of the people of Israel as a valley full of bones, very dry bones. In the Spirit he understood that God could make those bones live. God would cause the breath of his Spirit to enter those bones. He would cause flesh and sinews to come upon them, cover them with skin; the bones would come together, bone to bone, and they would live. God would open the graves of His people, and raise them to life, and bring them back from exile to their homeland. He would sprinkle clean water upon them,

and cleanse them from all their wrongdoings, put a new heart and a new spirit into them, and cause them to walk in His ways. God had no pleasure in the death of His people; He was waiting to restore life to them: chapters 36-37.

The experiences of the other prophets may be less dramatic, less sensational. The language and terminology of prophetic narratives differ. But the realities of prophetic experience are fundamentally the same. Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, ascribes the power of his mission and ministry to the Spirit: "As for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (3:8). He was fearless in his denunciation of the judges of his time who could be bribed to give any verdict, of the priests whose chief concern was with lining their pockets, of the false prophets who preached peace in the midst of glaring injustices and were ready to say anything that people paid for. He was an ordinary citizen, but he did not spare all these great ones who should have been leading the people aright but who were leading them astray.

Jeremiah was an ordinary mortal who did not at all think that he was cut out for a prophetic role. But God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong: I Cor. 1:27. The Spirit of God made the diffident and complaining Jeremiah "a fortified city, an iron pillar and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land" (1:18). They fought against him, but could not prevail against him. The Spirit gave him the courage to say to the ruling king, Jehoiakim: "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness...Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar?...You have eyes and heart only for your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practising oppression and violence" (22:13 f).

Spirit-inspired hope of the Spirit's coming in power

It is wrong to think of the prophets as a very special type of people whose experiences were absolutely unique. They were taken from among the people; Isaiah confesses that he is a man of unclean lips, and he dwelt in the midst of a people of un-

clean lips: 6:5. Jeremiah was keenly aware that the human heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt: 17:9. But the prophets understood what God could accomplish in and through weak human beings. What the prophets became through the power of the Holy Spirit — zealous witnesses to God, and bold spokesmen for him — all the people are called to be.

The Book of Numbers mentions the interesting fact of God's taking some of the Spirit which was upon Moses, and putting it upon seventy elders of Israel who were to assist Moses in the work of administration. Obviously this means that, through the mediation of Moses, there was granted to others some of the gifts of leadership that he himself had received from God. According to the narrative, Moses was so pleased with this wider distribution of the gifts of the Spirit that he exclaimed: Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them! (Num. 11:29).

As the messianic hope of the people of Israel was deepened and strengthened, the prophets foresaw that the dream of Moses about the universalized gift of the Spirit was to be realised in the days of the Messiah. The Messiah himself was conceived of as a person who would mediate salvation for the people precisely through being uniquely endowed with the gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord would rest upon him. He would be possessed of the gifts of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and reverence: Is. 11. It is because the Lord would put His Spirit upon the Messiah that He would be gentle and gracious, meek and humble, and at the same time possessed of superhuman strength and courage. He would not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street. A bruised reed he would not break, nor would he quench a dimly burning wick. He would faithfully bring forth deliverance for all the oppressed peoples of the world: Is. 42. Because the Lord would anoint the Messiah with His Spirit, the Messiah would bring good tidings to the afflicted, bind up the broken-hearted, and proclaim liberty to the captives: Is. 61.

It was understood that the Messiah would be a man for others, that He would be the source and channel of the Spirit for others. And the gift of the Spirit would usher in the new

earth and the new heaven, the last age of all-round reconciliation, reconciliation between the people and God, between man and man, between man and Nature: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them... They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Is. 11).

The Messiah, the Saviour uniquely endowed with the Spirit, would establish on earth the rule of justice and righteousness. The princes, those in authority under Him, would be for the people like a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land. Through him the Spirit would be poured upon the people from on high. Then the wilderness of our earth would become a fruitful field. Then the eyes of the blind would be opened, and the ears of the deaf would be unstopped; the lame man would leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb would sing for joy. Waters would break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The burning sand would become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water. The result of justice and righteousness being established would be peace and quietness and trust in the life of the people: Is. ch. 32; 35. The Messiah is thought of as effecting a total revolution on our earth through his gift of the Spirit. The work of the Messiah is correctly understood in such passages as the restoration of paradisaical conditions. Who is to blame if no revolution of this kind is taking place among us, if we have not yet beaten our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks, if nation is still lifting up sword against nation? Is: 2:4.

The prophet Joel had a special insight into the universality of the gift of the Spirit. In the days of the Messiah God would pour out his Spirit abundantly on all flesh: "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit" (3:1-2). The universalised messianic gift of the Spirit will transcend all distinctions of sex, age and rank.

Jesus Christ, the Giver of the New-Creative Spirit

The incarnate Son of God appeared among his fellow countrymen as one uniquely endowed with the gift of the Spirit. The Baptist saw the Spirit descend on him, and remain on him. He was the one sent by God to utter the words of God, and to give the Spirit without measure. He was the unique one whose unique mission was to baptise with the Holy Spirit, to grant inner purification. By His life, death, resurrection and glorification, He revealed himself as the giver of the Spirit, the Spirit of Truth and Love.

The thirsty who would receive from him the life-giving waters of the Spirit must open themselves to the gift of God, recognize the mystery of his person, and come to Him with the proper disposition of a true seeker. Only the one who committed himself or herself to Him would be ready to receive from Him the gift of his Spirit.

His own person, work and message are filled with the Spirit. His whole mission was a process of transformation by the Spirit both for himself and for those who responded to his invitation to self-commitment. It was in the eternal Spirit that He faced the tensions and struggles, labours and pains, challenges and disappointments, rewards and joys of His earthly life, and offered Himself without blemish to His Father (Heb. 9: 14), and He established through His resurrection an absolutely new form of human existence. Being made perfect in the glory of His risen life, He has become the source of eternal life and glory for all who obey Him: Heb. 5:9.

God's plan in creation was to put everything in subjection under our feet, and to crown us with a share in His own glory and honour, and to transform our world into the new earth and the new heaven through our cooperation. The Son of God became man in order to enable us to overcome the obstacles in the way of the realization of God's plan. He Himself was, for a little while, made lower than the angels, and He tasted death on behalf of us all. Now He is crowned with glory and honour as the firstfruits of the new heaven and earth: Heb, 2: 8f. To be open and willing to understand the pattern of death-resurrection, defeat-glorification as realized in the life of Jesus Christ, is the condition on which alone can anyone receive from God the gift of His Spirit: see Jn. 7:39.

Indian Symbols of the Holy Spirit

A few years ago I did a set of paintings on the Holy Spirit. The reason why I was especially interested in this theme went back, I believe, to something I had read in Coomaraswamy's book "Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art." Coomaraswamy writes:

"Critics nowadays speak of an artist as inspired by external objects, or even by his material. This is a misuse of language that makes it impossible for the student to understand the earlier literature on art. 'Inspiration' can never mean anything but the working of some spiritual force within you; the word is properly defined by Webster as a 'Supernatural divine influence'. The Docent, if a rationalist, may wish to deny the possibility of inspiration; but he must not obscure the fact that from Homer onwards the word has been used always with one exact meaning, that of Dante, when he says that Love, that is to say the Holy Ghost, 'inspires' him, and that he goes 'setting the matter forth even as He dictates within me". (p. 19)

My interest, then, in the Holy Spirit was not primarily in the *objective* reality of the Spirit, to be painted as a *thing*, but rather in its *subjective* reality, that is to say in the inspirational Force, which I was myself so deeply concerned with. In painting the Holy Spirit, I wanted, as it were, to paint the creative force within art itself. I revolted against those literal "concepts" of this Force, as, for example, a rather ponderous white dove. I wanted to show this Force as a process active within the imagination itself — the metaphor behind all metaphors, one might even say.

The question "Are there any symbols in India which characterize what we as Christians mean by the Holy Spirit?" seemed to me to be going at the problem in a very limited way. The question seems to suppose that there is a *thing*, the Holy Spirit, which Christians are familiar with (even possess!) which can or cannot be adequately translated into some Indian symbol. It seems to me that the Holy Spirit is in fact the symbolic process, for symbols are "inspired" and therefore arise out of the Holy Spirit. Every truly felt expression of the imagination within man, somehow shows forth the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps this statement needs a little further expansion, as too often we are accustomed to thinking of the Holy Spirit as a *content* of the imagination (something that we imagine) rather than the *Mover* of the imagination itself. It seems to me that the connection between Indian thought and Christian thought is not to be found in the dogmatic structures of various religious schools of thought (Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Christian...) which are the crystalizations of Faith, but in the *inspired* nature of religious thought processes. For me Indian thought is clearly inspired — I begin from there. Of course I know there is a theological controversy over this: is Indian thought inspired or not inspired? I am not a theologian, and must confess I cannot often understand the technical niceties with which this question is posed by theologians... As an artist, trusting to the intuitional response of my inner imagination, I *feel* that Indian thought is deeply inspired. I must begin from this intuition. I feel that Force which "brings to birth in beauty", present in the great insights of Indian poetry from the time of the Vedas down to our own times. I am not at all sure that we can find any "doctrine" in Hindu thought which could be related to the Christian doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit. I doubt there is any clearly formalized concept of the Holy Spirit in Indian thought — what there is, is an *experience*. And art arises out of an experience which takes hold of an artist, rather than any set of clearly defined concepts. I do feel that in Indian thought there is a deep sense of life being inspired.

Perhaps the most basic idea of this would be "*Prāna*" or "Life Force" as understood in terms of breath. Certainly the

Indian cosmologies which found themselves on the notion of *Prāna* are very ancient. Is this "*Prāna*" the most basic symbol of the Inspiring Force? ('Inspire' means 'to breath into'). As an artist I use the term "symbol" in a rather specific sense. For me a symbol is a *thing* (to be seen, touched etc.) which can be found in nature, and is "inspired" but not *itself* inspiration. I think that there can be no adequate image of this Spirit, for that would be to define the Spirit, to know where it comes from, and where it is going, to hold it in one's hands. Symbols however are pointers, they show the direction in which the Spirit is moving. As with the wind which blows through trees, we see the wind passing by noting its effects, the swaying branches, the dancing leaves. We do not see the wind itself. So also with the symbol. The symbol, or rather, the symbolic system as a whole, reveals the passage of the Spirit, its movement, but is not itself the Spirit. In my set of pictures I tried to use different poetic metaphors (derived from Indian poetry) such as Fire, the Descent of the Heavenly River, the Bee that enters the Flower, the Hamsa etc., to indicate an Indian thought process on the theme of inspiration itself. My purpose was not to define the Holy Spirit, but to point to it, using metaphors.

This brings me to what I feel is a very central "symbol" in Indian art — that of the dancing body. In Indian thought, dance is conceived of as the mother of all the arts. I have meditated on this often. All the inspired figures of Indian art are dancing figures. Their whole body radiates the moving force within. Even nature is depicted as "dancing" in its rhythmic movements, its arabesques of twisting, flowing lines. I have often tried to represent Christ as a dancer, because I feel that the figure of the dancer reveals the presence of the Inspiring Force, in the same way as the dancing tree reveals the movement of the wind.

If there are "symbols" of the Holy Spirit, they are symbols also of the Incarnation. I have wondered whether, when John the Baptist saw the Spirit literally descending on Christ as He stood in the waters, there was anything external to be seen (like a dove) or whether a change in *Christ* himself was apparent, which was metaphorically explained in this conventional way. For me Christ Himself became the most perfect symbol (and perhaps the only *possible* symbol) of the Spirit, as it was

revealed moving within the flesh of the Incarnate Lord. The Holy Spirit was the way Christ walked, the way He looked and spoke, the way He lifted His hands in inspired gestures. When the multitudes looked on Christ, they looked on Him as on a dancer filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit. And this dance was infectious — it seemed to pour out of Him, and shed its light all around Him, so that all those who followed Him were called on to join in His dance.

The symbols of the Holy Spirit are, therefore, symbols of liberation, of the freeing of the body from its inherently static gravity. This is not a Platonic myth concerning the caging of a divine spark within the prison of the body (soma), which has to be released from the body. Rather this is a picture of the body somehow transfigured from within, so that from being a dead body it becomes a living and dancing one. Every movement of the body celebrates the presence of the Spirit. This transformation will finally be realized in the Resurrection of the Body. It is this reality that I would like to celebrate in my pictures.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Bangalore

Jyoti Sahi

What the Spirit says to the Churches

The twentieth century, it has often been said, will go down in history as the century of the Church. For this very reason, too, our times have witnessed a renewed awareness of and interest in the Holy Spirit, Who is at the heart of the Church. This breath of the Spirit – for it is nothing else – was almost tangibly felt at the Vatican Council. But to those who have eyes to see, the Spirit is fulfilling God's age-old promise made through His prophet, "Behold, I am doing a new thing" (Is. 43 : 18) also in less spectacular but more living fashion in the rich variety of initiatives and movements that continue to spring up everywhere – multiform expressions of, and efforts at, the renewal of the Church that was Vatican II's overarching aim and concern. One of the outstanding movements of our times is the Pentecostal Movement.

Part One of this article aims at presenting an outline of the *history* of the Catholic Pentecostal Movement, with some of its more characteristic features. Part Two will be concerned with an *evaluation* of it.

I. Historical Outline

Beginnings

The Catholic Pentecostal Movement, or the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, as it is more commonly called, is only one chapter of a larger movement affecting all the Christian churches which Edward O'Connor calls, "One of the most significant developments of modern Christianity".¹ Though Western Chri-

1. Edward D. O'Connor, C. S. C., *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Ind. 1971, p. 21. For more information on the Catholic Pentecostal Movement, the reader is referred to O'Connor and to Kevin & Dorathy Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals*, Paulist Press Deus Books, N. Y. 1969. Both books have helpful bibliographies.

stianity has seen repeated outbreaks of "Enthusiasm" (the term is Ronald Knox's) from the Montanists of the 3rd century to the Irvingites of the 19th, modern Pentecostalism may be said to date from the early years of this century. Topeka, Kansas in 1901 and Los Angeles, California in 1906, were the scenes of heightened experiences of the Holy Spirit, with the charismatic manifestations of praying in tongues. In Topeka it was Charles Parham's Bible school; In Los Angeles, a group of whites and blacks who held prayer meetings led by a black preacher, W. S. Seymour, in an abandoned church on Azusa Street. The movement spread like wildfire and in the short space of three years, thousands of people across the United States reportedly received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. These early Pentecostals met with fierce opposition and were driven out of the established Protestant churches. They banded together and formed the first Pentecostal churches. Today the Pentecostals number anything between 35 and 53 million and are to be found all over the world.² It was only in the 1950's that Pentecostal trends began to find a home in the established Churches in U.S.A. such as the Episcopal, Lutheran and Presbyterian, in which they formed a separate and some-what recognizable stream. This phenomenon came to be termed "neo-Pentecostalism". Its charismatic manifestations, such as glossolalia or speaking in tongues, were first subjected to a severe scrutiny before being accepted by the Churches.

In the Catholic Church

The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church is barely eleven years old. It had its origins in Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, in 1967, from where it spread almost immediately to Notre Dame University, Indiana, and to the Catholic parish of Michigan State University. Surprisingly, it was born and nurtured in the sophisticated milieu of university circles. A faculty and student prayer-group at Duquesne and another later at Notre Dame, testified to having undergone a transforming spiritual experience in February 1967. This was marked also by the appearance, in the groups, of charismatic gifts reminiscent of those

2. The 11th Pentecostal World Conference met in London, October 1976, with 12,000 delegates, representing more than 350 Pentecostal denominations. cf. *Charisindia*, Jan.-Feb. 1977, p. 22

mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles: speaking in tongues, prophecy and discernment. This early outburst of charismatic experience had all the spontaneity and unexpectedness of the working of the Spirit: no one could say exactly where it had come from and whither it was going. Except in a few isolated instances, it sprang up independently of influences from the Pentecostal or the neo-Pentecostal Churches. Paradoxically, the first stirrings of Pentecostalism got a much more favourable reception in the Catholic Church than it had in the various Protestant denominations. Prayer groups multiplied both on the East and West coasts of the US, numbering as many as 203 groups of varying sizes and composition by 1970. Though statistics are to be taken with caution, one can gain a rough idea of the rapid, almost phenomenal growth of the Charismatic Renewal in the United States from the number of the participants at the Annual National Conventions, whose organization is one of the special activities of the Notre Dame group. There were 1279 full-time participants, with 1400 people at the closing liturgy (with 45 priests concelebrating) in 1970; 11,500 participants (with 7 bishops and some 400 priests) in 1972; and nearly 30,000 participants (with 7 bishops and some 800 priests concelebrating at the final liturgy) in 1976.

Though the Charismatic Renewal originated in the US and may sometimes give the impression of being an "American" phenomenon, it is far from being restricted to that country. Prayer groups, the most characteristic 'format' of the Movement, have sprung up all over the world.³ A random sampling of Charismatic news gives one an inkling of the extension and the consolidation of the Renewal.⁴ Thus 1976 saw National Conventions in Ireland, India and Pakistan; National Leaders' Conferences in Chile, India, Nigeria and Spain: a special pilgrimage (of 7000 people) to Lourdes; and active participation in the International Eucharistic Congress at Philadelphia - with a prayer meeting and liturgy attended by about 40,000 charismatics.

3. The *Directory of Catholic Charismatic Prayer Groups* (June, 1974) lists 2480 prayer groups all over the world, with a membership of 107,209.

4. cf. *Charisindia*, Jan.-Feb. 1977, p. 22

The Indian situation

The story of the Renewal in India will, naturally, be of particular interest to us. From available information,⁵ the first charismatic prayer group appears to have begun in Bombay in February 1972, with just six members. Within a few months there were 12 groups in the city, and today Bombay counts some 30 groups of different sizes – from a dozen to as many as 200–300 participants each—composed of lay people, sisters and priests. Detailed statistics are not yet available of groups elsewhere in the country. Bangalore, Goa, Poona and Kerala have several each, while most major cities and dioceses have at least one. Some indication of the growing number of people in the Renewal may be gathered from the fact that the Second National Charismatic Convention, held at Bandra in October 1976, mustered 1500 delegates. These included 50 foreign delegates from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Holland, Sri Lanka and the US. The final liturgy was concelebrated for almost 3500 people by two arch-bishops (full-time participants) and 100 priests.⁶

Of even greater significance than the increasing numbers are various pointers indicating the inner growth and steady consolidation of the Renewal, as well as its growing integration into the life of the Church in India. On the organizational level, we may mention that the CBCI, at its 1976 meeting in Hyderabad, entrusted its Liturgy Committee with the promotion and guidance of the Charismatic Renewal in this country. The First National Leaders' Conference for lay and clerical group leaders was held in Bangalore in May, 1977, and attended by 210 delegates. On this occasion a National Service Team of eleven members was constituted and a National Advisory Council to aid it. The aim of these two bodies is coordination and discernment: the overseeing of National Conventions and Conferences, and guidance for the growth of the Renewal and its integration into the life of the Church. Bombay has its own Service Team of 10 elected members which, besides serving to coordinate and ani-

5. Most of these details have been gleaned from issues of *Charisindia*.

6. From reliable information it appears that there are around 300 prayer groups in India, with a total membership of about 5000.

mate activities in the city, offers a service on the national level by providing material in the form of literature, cassettes and tapes, and publishing the bimonthly magazine, *Charisindia*.⁷

The dynamic thrust and growth of the Renewal appears also in the comparatively large number of seminars and retreats of the Renewal conducted all over the country; the special clergy Renewal retreats organized in several dioceses (Bangalore, Ernakulam, Hyderabad and Varanasi are a few examples); and the two Intercessory Retreats for bishops and priests – of 12 days in 1976 and 21 days in 1977 – and a similar one for Sisters (two weeks) in 1977.

By way of a few final touches to this rapid sketch of the history and growth of the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church, we may mention that several Hierarchies have taken official notice of the Movement. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the US published an official report in 1969, and they have more recently appointed a committee of four bishops to be a liaison with the Renewal. The Canadian Bishops, for their part, issued a "Message" on the Renewal in 1975.⁸ It is an extended statement, comprising a careful and detailed evaluation of the Charismatic Renewal – its assets and weaknesses, and its hope for the renewal of the Church as a whole. The Antilles Bishops Conference (West Indies) made an official statement of approval and encouragement in 1977. The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has appointed one of its members as Ecclesiastical Assistant to the Renewal in Britain. In fulfilment of a mandate given him by Pope Paul, Cardinal Suenens will serve as Episcopal Adviser to the International Communi-

7. This organization is patterned on the set-up in the US. Ann Arbor, Michigan is the location of the International Service Team; also of a Bureau which offers materials covering the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and publishes the monthly, *New Covenant*, which is practically the semi-official international organ of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

8. Text in *The Furrow*, March 1976, pp. 176–185

cation Office of the Charismatic Renewal set up in 1972 at Ann Arbor, Michigan.⁹

Chief elements of the Charismatic Renewal

Perhaps the first thing that should be said is that to call the Charismatic Renewal a "Movement" – the term has been used here – can be misleading. For this term would imply a number of people who have joined forces in a concerted effort for a definite goal. So, far from being some preconceived project, the Renewal may be described rather as the spontaneous revitalizing of the Christian faith, so that doctrine becomes experience; a conversion to Christ which ratifies in life our Christian initiation in baptism, confirmation and the eucharist; a commitment to the Father through Christ in His Spirit, in which the three divine Persons are "for real" in the Christian's life. It is nothing more than this, but also nothing less. It is therefore essentially the recapturing of the original evangelical experience of the early Christian community that is so vividly portrayed for us in the Acts of the Apostles: a life that flowed out of the climatic Pentecost "event", which was the birth and the launching into mission of the Spiritfilled and Spirit-guided community we call the Church. True, the Renewal, in the course of its development, has tried to spell out these ideals and has inevitably evolved a certain amount of organization. But one should never forget that these trappings of a "movement" are only peripheral and transitional – destined to die out, to the extent and in the measure in which the entire Church is "renewed".

These considerations should help to lay the spectre of elitism and exclusivism that haunts the imagination of some people as they see the Renewal. No person or group of persons has a corner on the Spirit. Every Christian is, by vocation and

9. Cardinal Suenens' active personal interest and participation in the Charismatic Renewal is well known. He is the author of *A new Pentecost?* (Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1975). In 1974 he gathered an international team of theologians and lay leaders at Malines, Belgium, who drew up the document, *Theological and Pastoral Orientations on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*.

identity, "pentecostal" – Spirit-filled and Spirit-gifted – as the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters of St. Paul make abundantly clear. And the Charismatic Renewal lays no claim to being more than just one way of contributing to the evangelizing of the Church, which is simply the making personal Christians of sociological or cultural ones and turning practising Christians into confessing ones.

So much having been said about the nature of the Renewal, we may now go on to consider some of the main features that mark it out everywhere.

Prayer Meetings

Prayer meetings are probably the most common and characteristic means by which the spirit of the Renewal is both expressed and fostered. It was such meetings, it may be recalled, that provided the setting for the earliest charismatic "experiences" both in and outside the Catholic Church. The prayer meeting, in general, follows the pattern of what the earliest Christian house eucharists seem to have been, from hints we have in Paul's letters.

"When you meet for worship, each of you contributes a hymn, some instruction, a revelation, an ecstatic utterance, or the interpretation of such an utterance. All of these must aim at one thing: to build up the church." (1 Cor. 14: 26)

"Let the Holy Spirit fill you: speak to one another in psalms, hymns and songs; sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord; and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ give thanks everyday for everything to our God and Father." (Eph. 5: 18-20; cf. Col. 3: 16-17)

Says O'Connor: "The prayer meeting is a form of worship that combines the utmost in freedom and community."¹⁰ These two tendencies which, at first sight, might seem to conflict, do in fact

10. E. O'Connor, *op. cit.* p. 112

work together in a healthy balance. They come clearly through the variety of spontaneous self-expression in song (strongly marked by a mood of joy, to the accompaniment at times of rhythmic clapping) and individual and group prayer, interspersed now with a Scripture reading or a prophecy, now with a "teaching" (on a text of Scripture or on some aspect of Christian doctrine or spirituality) or an occasional "testimony" to some spiritual experience or favour received, now with a period of silent prayer or of praying and singing in tongues—the whole usually concluding with a period of intercession. Not all these elements are present in every meeting, and their frequency and proportion vary from group to group. How the meeting builds up is, we might say, the Holy Spirit's guess. Though there is (and generally should be) a leader of the meeting, this role is not rigidly defined and would perhaps be more accurately described as that of a "facilitator". Every participant, in fact, is free to express himself or herself as he or she feels moved, remaining always sensitive to the members of the group. It is striking how, spontaneously yet unmistakably, the group gradually grows into a community, shaped by the force of Christian love manifested in mutual openness, sympathy, support and a desire to share. If Christ promised to be wherever men gather in his name, His presence is almost palpably felt at a prayer meeting; and it is no doubt He who, through His Spirit, welds the sometimes quite heterogeneous elements of a group into a veritable fraternity. No wonder then that charismatic prayer meetings, contrary to the opinion that people sometimes have of them, are marked by a sense of deep prayerfulness and peace, a tone of joy and spiritual exaltation and an atmosphere of warmth and fraternal concern. The picture of a prayer meeting as little more than a happy time of noisy clapping, prancing and hugging-and-kissing is, to say the least, a grotesque caricature of the reality.

The Charisms

Along with and consequent on the Renewal's vivid awareness of the Holy Spirit is its living faith in the existence and operation of His gifts or charisms. Let us repeat here that, its name notwithstanding, the Renewal makes no claim to having a monopoly of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Acts of the Apostles and the Letters of Paul make it plain that the charisms,

for all their gratuitous character, are what Rahner calls the "dynamic element in the church",¹¹ part of her ordinary equipment gifted to her by the Spirit's bounty and destined for the support, the strengthening and the upbuilding of the Body of Christ. As such they are not the preserve of any group or section of the Church. The only difference is that, whereas the run-of-the-mill Catholic hardly ever adverts to their existence, and thinks of them (if he does at all) as an interesting curiosity of the apostolic age, the participants of the Renewal are convinced that these same gifts belong equally to the Church of the twentieth – and of every – century, and therefore can and must be awaited with expectant faith. This is, after all, no more than what Vatican II quite clearly affirms in a well-known passage of *Lumen Gentium*:

It is not only through the sacraments and the Church ministries that the same Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the People of God and enriches it with virtues. Allotting His gifts "to every one according as He wills" (I Cor. 2: 11), He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks or offices advantageous for the renewal and upbuilding of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit" (I Cor. 12: 7). These charismatic gifts, whether they be the most outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanks-giving and consolation, for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the Church. (art. 12)¹²

In 1 Cor. 12: 8–10, the *locus classicus* for this subject, Paul mentions gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, speaking in tongues and the interpretation

11. K. Rahner, S. J., "The Charismatic Element in the Church," in *The Dynamic Element in the Church*, Burns & Oates, London, 1964.

12. The same teaching on the charisms is found in the Decree on The Apostolate of the Laity, art. 3

of a message in tongues. This list has to be complemented by Rom. 12: 6-8 and Eph. 4: 11. The three passages together, as we know, are not intended to give us an inventory of the charisms, but are an attempt to portray the riches of the Spirit and the wonderful diversity of His workings. For our present purpose we want to single out just two or three of these charisms for the briefest treatment. We choose them, not because of their intrinsic importance or value, but on account of their more frequent connection with the Charismatic Renewal. Indeed, this connection is sometimes exaggerated by outsiders to the point of equating the Pentecostal experience with the charisms, which is rather like putting the cart before the horse.

Speaking in Tongues or glossolalia, is a phenomenon that seems to have been common in Apostolic times. The Christian community of Corinth, in particular, appears to have been richly endowed with this and many other spiritual gifts; but the very exuberance of these charisms led to disorders, which Paul energetically corrects in his letters to that Church. Glossolalia is probably the most misunderstood of the charisms in the Renewal today and one that is at times even the object of ridicule. It is not possible – and would be outside the scope of this article – to enter into a detailed discussion of this complex phenomenon.¹³ Suffice it to say here that glossolalia, as commonly understood and exercised in the Charismatic Renewal, is not – or is only quite exceptionally – the speaking of a recognized identifiable language unknown to the speaker. Actually, it is the uttering of unintelligible sounds or syllables, in more or less rhythmic

13. Glossolalia has been the subject of study and discussion in several books and articles. Besides O'Connor and Ranaghan (cf. note 1), one could mention: Stagg, Hinson & Oates, *Glossolalia: A Biblical, Historical and Psychological Perspective*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tenn. 1967; W. J. Samaria, *Tongues of Men and Angels*, Macmillan Co, N. Y., 1972 (A sociolinguistic study); S. Tugwell, O. P., *Did you receive the Spirit?*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1972, Chaps. 7 & 8. In spite of certain attempts to attribute this phenomenon to emotional disturbance, suggestibility and even hysteria, the findings of serious psychologists have tended to discredit such interpretations. O'Connor mentions some examples *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124.

fashion, which "make no sense" linguistically either to the speaker or to the hearers.

Basically, tongues can be an aid to prayer of a non-rational, preconceptual form; an exuberance or overflow of man's spirit that goes beyond the images and thoughts that are his normal means of reaching out to God;¹⁴ hence, too, a way of giving rest to the phrenetic activity of the mind – a value appreciated by spiritual masters of all traditions. Contrary to what many think, the tongue-speaker is not "beside himself" or in some form of trance, but is in full possession of himself; so much so, in fact, that tongue-speaking is a voluntary activity, begun or stopped at will. Tongues is primarily prayer of praise and thanksgiving, ordained to the upbuilding of the community. But it may also be a means of intercession, particularly when we "do not know how to pray as we ought", and therefore allow the Spirit to intercede within and for us (cf. Rom. 8: 26–27). Though glossolalic utterance is usually addressed to God and is not intended for others (cf. 1 Cor. 14: 2), Paul knows of a similar utterance that is directed to the community. In this case there is need of someone correspondingly gifted to interpret the message for the hearers (cf. I Cor. 12: 10; 14: 5–13). Though glossolalia is, of its nature, easily perceptible and hence has attracted more than its fair share of attention, Paul seems to place it on the lowest rung of the charismatic ladder – an evaluation that is generally shared by people in the Renewal today.

Prophecy is the other charism that makes a frequent appearance in today's Renewal groups. The term is used here in the original Biblical sense. It implies both a special aptitude

14. Mystics and spiritual writers, too, have known of similar experiences. Thus, St. Theresa of Avila, in her *Life*: "Then the soul does not know what it should do, whether to speak or be silent, laugh or cry.... Then many words are pronounced in praise of God, yet without order, unless God Himself gives the order; however the human mind can do nothing."

St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Homo Apostolicus* (Append. A 15): "Spiritual intoxication causes the soul to break forth in, as it were, delirium, such as songs, cries, immoderate weeping...."

and docility to movements of the Spirit in discerning God's salvific intentions in a given historical situation, as well as a positive impulse from the Spirit to bear witness publicly to this. The word of prophecy is, then, the word of the Lord to a particular situation by way of instruction, encouragement or correction, and destined for the spiritual upbuilding of the community. Obviously a prophecy would need to be authenticated as to its source. The general criterion for this would presumably be its acceptance by the community – immediate or gradual – the fruits of which, according to the general principles of spiritual discernment, are the mysterious but unmistakable signs of the Holy Spirit's presence and action (cf. Gal. 5: 22-23). Paul, who emphasized the communitarian and ecclesial purpose of the charisms, is therefore at pains to show his Christians of Corinth the superiority of prophecy to glossolalia (cf. 1 Cor. 14: 1-5, 19).

Mention must be made here, at least in passing, of another charism of growing importance in circles of the Renewal today: *Healing*.¹⁵ By its emphasis on this gift of the Spirit, the Charismatic Renewal has helped to reawaken in the Church the awareness of an integral but largely forgotten aspect of Jesus' ministry and message, and of the Christian meaning of salvation. This, in turn, will help to open up fresh perspectives on, and a new understanding of, the Church's sacramental ministry – particularly of the sacraments of Reconciliation, Anointing and the Eucharist – which can gain from the current developments of the human sciences.

Baptism in the Spirit

This term originates from the words of Jesus before his Ascension, as recorded in Acts 1: 5. It refers to the pneumatic experience of the 120 persons gathered in expectant prayer on the day of Pentecost. What does this "Baptism" mean in the

15. The best known Catholic treatment of this subject is by Francis MacNutt, O. p., *Healing*, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Ind., 1974. On the Protestant side, cf. Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light*, Charisma Books, Watchung, N. J., 1947 (Rev. ed. 1972); J. Cameron Peddie, *The Forgotten Talent*, Collins, Fontana Books, 1966.

Renewal today? Here we have a basic parting of the ways between Pentecostals and Catholics.¹⁶ Pentecostals tend to understand it almost as if it were a kind of second baptism, which they oppose to "water baptism". For Catholics, obviously, there can be no question of a second baptism in the strict sense of the word. "Water baptism" is also "Spirit baptism", for it bears the Spirit Himself, God's greatest Gift, who makes us children of God, conformed to the image of His Son. Consequently the baptism in the Spirit can only mean a renewal or reawakening in us and a ratifying of our basic Christian initiation, by a renewed "openness" to the Holy Spirit in deliberate, growing surrender to Him. By this His power is unleashed to sanctify us and to use us as His instruments by His enabling gifts or the charisms. This is what Catholic charismatics mean when they speak of an "infilling" or a "release" of the Spirit, of "receiving the Spirit" and being "Spirit-filled". Admittedly, baptism in the Spirit is an ambiguous term, which can lead to confusion. It is often retained, however; because the suggested alternatives are not without their own difficulties. Finally, it may be pertinent to remark that the Pentecostal experience is not to be reduced to "the Baptism" event, for "the purpose of the Renewal is not to bring persons to a one-time experience, but to an ongoing life in Christ through the Spirit, to continual growth".¹⁷

II. Evaluation

After this historical and phenomenological survey of the Charismatic Renewal, the picture could be completed with a

16. For a Catholic appraisal of the Baptism cf. George Montague, S. M., "Baptism in the Spirit and Speaking in Tongues: A Biblical Appraisal", *Theology Digest* XX₁ (Winter 1973), 342-361; Francis Sullivan, S. J., "Baptism in the H. Spirit: A Catholic Interpretation of the Pentecostal Experience", *Gregorianum* 55 (1974), pp. 49-66.; Kilian McDonnell, O. S. B. & A. Bittlinger. *Baptism in the H. Spirit as an Ecumenical Problem*, Charismatic Renewal Services, Notre Dame, Ind., 1972. *Theological & Pastoral Orientations*, Word of Life, Notre Dame, Ind., 1974, pp. 29-33.

17. *Theological and Pastoral Orientations*, p. 33

concluding evaluation of the Renewal, highlighting some of its strengths and weaknesses, and its hope for the future of the Church.¹⁸

"The Church needs an eternal Pentecost," Pope Paul once said. Not a one-time, but an ongoing Christian experience, stylized for us in the Lucan narrative of the Pentecost "event": a daily renewed openness to the Holy Spirit that will allow Him to transform lives and to use men as the instruments of His sanctifying mission; an experience that breathes something of the freshness and the spontaneity, the creativity and the joy, that are the marks of God's Spirit. The Charismatic Renewal appears to be a providential means for this Spirit-renewal—not the only one, to be sure, but a peculiarly potent one, nonetheless. Its power and promise stem chiefly from the deeply Christian and Evangelical values from which it takes its inspiration, and the fostering of which is its sole *raison d'être*. The belief in our loving Father, whose life we are called on to share in His Son, through the gift of His Spirit, and the total commitment this calls for on man's part—this is the well-spring of the inspiration and dynamism of the Renewal.

Assets

The peculiar strength of the Charismatic Renewal is in its *experiential* approach to the faith. Religious experience may be described as "an awareness of a response to the divine, whereby one feels the divine presence or one's total dependence on the divinity". It is characterized and distinguished from merely intellectual or cerebral knowledge by its immediacy, the total involvement of the person and a certain intensity. The charismatic has an experience of the power of the Holy Spirit and of the love of Jesus, who saves and brings love peace and joy. The

18. Much helpful information may be found in the summary comprehensive survey and evaluation of the Charismatic Renewal in *Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin* no. 60 (May 1976), Brussels; cf. also E.O'Connor, C. S. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 179-286; *Theological and Pastoral Orientations* (cf. previous note); "Statement of the Theological Basis of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal", *One in Christ X* (1974), 206-215.

pages of the New Testament – especially the Acts, Paul and John – testify to the role and importance of experience in the early Christian community – dynamic, inspirational and confirmatory of the genuineness of the Christian's call and the Apostle's mission.¹⁹ If the Holy Spirit was active in the early Church, there is no reason why His presence and activity should not be experienced today too, with its same transforming power. In its experiential approach, the Renewal in India meets a providential *kairos* today from two angles. The West is undergoing a hunger for "experience" today, due to many causes which cannot be entered into here. The Church in our country is currently engaged in an intensive exploration and study of India's spiritual heritage. God-experience has always had pride of place in our religious traditions. The *guru* is one who has "seen" God and whose "teaching" is, above all, a sharing of his own experience.

This approach has an all-embracing nature. Man's whole being – intellect, will and emotions – is engaged and drawn into his movement towards God, both as expression and support of it. The strong emotional appeal of the element of joy in Christianity – which is the "Good News" after all – overflows into and is reinforced by music and the body language of gesture, and powerfully attracts people, the youth especially, who are left unsatisfied by our often staid and formal liturgical ceremonies. Commitment is the source of the deep renewal of individual and community *prayer* – the first and greatest gift of the Charismatic Movement – which preferentially takes the form of praise and petition. Hence the spirit of perennial childlike wonder and joy: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are!" (1 Jn 3:1).

Quite naturally, the Charismatic Renewal is marked also by a new hunger for the Word of God as offered to us in the Holy *Scriptures*, the foundation of our faith and its constant nourishment. This is a leaven which is reviving in the Church a love and personal appreciation of the Scriptures, both in the Christian's daily life as well as in the prayer meetings. Many are

19. cf. D. Mollat, S. J., "The Role of Experience in the New Testament Teaching on Baptism and the coming of the H. Spirit", *One in Christ X* (1974), pp. 129-147.

the testimonies of lay people and priests who tell of how the Bible has come alive for them, as they turn instinctively to it for inspiration and guidance. Another important aspect of the promise that the Charismatic Renewal holds out is its strong emphasis on *community*, as manifested especially in the fundamental gospel values of reconciliation and sharing. The Church is experienced as the *koinonia* of God's love and peace – Shalom – given to us by the Spirit of His Son – the “fellowship of the Holy Spirit.” This deep participation, if genuine, will seek to translate itself, on the human social level, in various forms of sharing. Witness the early Christian community of the Acts (2: 42, 44–47). Some Christian thinkers today, like Rahner and Delespesse, see the hope of the Church's survival and apostolic effectiveness in the diaspora situation of the future chiefly in the building up of “basic communities”.²⁰ The Charismatic Movement offers various models of community, from the ordinary prayer group to the closely-knit covenant communities, examples of which are to be found scattered in different places. It is by the multiplication of such communities – whatever be their differing external format – that the Church will be gradually but surely renewed by the Spirit, so that this little flock may more truly fulfil its mission of being “a lasting and sure seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race.” (LG 9). A final strength and asset of the Charismatic Renewal, one which underlies all those we have mentioned, is the fact that it is, by and large, a *lay movement*. It was so in its origins and it has retained this character everywhere. Though the lack of clerical interest and participation in many places (which is slowly diminishing) is unfortunate, and can at times act as a brake on the Movement, it is not without a certain compensation in the large initiative and freedom that it has left to the layman – from many points of view, a desirable and heartening development in the life of the Church. The Charismatic Renewal is thus largely a grassroots movement.

20. cf. K. Rahner, S. J., *The Shape of the Church to Come*, Seabury Press, N. Y., 1974, pp. 109–118; M. Delespesse, *The Church Community, Leaven and Life-Style*, The Catholic Centre of St. Paul Univ., Ottawa, 1969; Stephen Clark, *Building Christian Communities*, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Ind., 1972.

Dangers

Lest this picture of hope and promise should seem to be overdrawn and too idealistic, let us hasten to add that the Charismatic Renewal, in the concrete, is not without its share of weaknesses and dangers. Criticisms of it are not wanting, a few verging on the bizarre, but many that are responsible and well-advised. One may tend to brush away many of them on the score that no human movement or institution – the Church included – is free of blemishes and weaknesses, and that one should more fairly judge it by its best, rather than by its mediocre or poorer representatives. But the possibility and existence of deficiencies, however occasional, should alert us to the danger signals they transmit, and make us sensitive to criticism that is well-meant and constructive.

One of the more common accusations levelled against the Charismatic Movement is that it fosters Charismania or a hankering after the gifts of the Spirit. Truth to tell, the charge of charismania may at times be the unconscious projection of a certain charisphobia on the part of many who have a wrong notion of the gifts of the Spirit, and are therefore unduly suspicious of, and somehow ill at ease in, this whole area of the Christian life. Vatican II, also, warns that “extraordinary gifts are not to be rashly sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labour to be presumptuously expected from them” (LG 12). Some charismatics do evince a tendency to give charisms a centrality not found even in the New Testament. But the more real danger would seem to lie in a topsy-turvy comparative evaluation of the gifts, with the emphasis on the more apparent and sensational ones (like tongues and prophecy) – which are really secondary, as Paul pointed out long ago – rather than on those which are more fundamental and of greater value for the edification of the Church. Paul’s exhortation to “seek the better gifts” is always timely. Incidentally, it is perhaps this mistaken emphasis of the less enlightened that is partly responsible for the image of elitism that the Renewal sometimes evokes.

A more serious charge is that the Renewal is too inward-looking and, specifically, is lacking in the social concern that is an essential dimension of the Gospel. Admittedly there is a real

danger - no doubt verified in some cases - of a cosy turning in on oneself. Yet one might, not unfairly, answer that the key to the changing of social structures is the renewal of men which is, after all, the whole business of the Charismatic Movement, and that it is therefore deeply (even if indirectly) outward looking. But one could more directly point to the outreach of many Renewal groups and to the growing social consciousness of the Movement as a whole as reflected, for instance in various articles in *New Covenant*. Examples are also not wanting of active social concern in some South American countries.

Perhaps the most serious danger that the Renewal faces, though, is that of a certain Fundamentalism. This may be described, in general, as a simplistic way of viewing the divine activity in man's life which tends to see it in isolation from God's activity through secondary causes, and consequently to undervalue the human element in various forms of religious experience. This attitude can show itself in various degrees and forms, and is particularly dangerous when allied with subjectivism.

Fundamentalism appears, for instance, in a too literal approach to the Bible. One overlooks the basic truth that the Word of God has been given to us in words of men, conditioned by a variety of social and cultural circumstances; and that there is therefore need of a hermeneutic to get at the message. This is one of the pitfalls that the Movement is particularly open to on account of its lay character, as the Malines statement expressly admits:

It (the Movement) is lay in its rhetoric, in its procedures, and in the immediacy with which it approaches religious problems. This lay character is one of the major strengths of the renewal and should be guarded. However, because it is characterized by lay categories, it also has a lay approach to the Sacred Scriptures. This means that it tends to approach the text directly and to allow the text to speak without the aid of a formulated hermeneutic.²¹

21. *Theological and Pastoral Orientations*, p. 39.

There is need for a more solid and enlightened study of the Bible based on critical methods, which the directives of the Church in our century have repeatedly encouraged.

In a quite different area, Fundamentalism can sometimes underlie what is taken for loyalty to the Church – where “the Church” can be too easily identified with its institutional and authority structures. The Spirit of God, as the principle of our spiritual life and growth, summons man continually to a greater authenticity and fidelity, and therefore also to a questioning of himself as well as of the human element in the Church. Vatican II reminds us that “the Church, embracing sinners in her bosom, is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal” (LG 8), and that she is “well aware that among her members, both clerical and lay, some have been unfaithful to the Spirit of God during the course of many centuries” (GS 43). While questioning of a sort can be unhealthy, and dissent is not necessarily always prophetic, it is helpful to remember that apathy can also, and quite innocently, parade as loyalty.

A more subtle form of Fundamentalism may sometimes be discerned in an unconscious attempt to tie down the transcendent and mysterious working of the Holy Spirit to our human conceptions, expectations and desires, however religiously inspired. May this not be the case, for instance, with an uncritical understanding of the uniqueness of Christianity that tends to belittle the salvific activity of God in the other world religions? Again, the understanding and the ritual of “the baptism in the Spirit” and the desire for the gifts of the Holy Spirit must always steer clear of any semblance of this type of Fundamentalism. An over-emphasis on the physical aspect of Healing can also be a manifestation of a fundamentalistic mentality. This, too, is a danger one sometimes meets with. Our belief in Healing as an essential dimension of the Christian message – which has admittedly suffered eclipse until recent times – must be integrated into the total understanding of that message, in which redemptive suffering, too, has a mysterious but no less real part to play.

We would like to conclude this evaluation with a few summary observations on the Renewal in India. In a perceptive article on "The Meaning and Role of the Charismatic Renewal in the Church in India today," Father Amalorpavadass points out that the peculiar strength of the Renewal in India and its promise lies in the fact that it "joins our pilgrimage to the sources of Indian spirituality" and "has come to India, which is a land of the Spirit".²² This *kairos*, which we have referred to above, presents the Church with both a challenge and an opportunity: the challenge to return to her spiritual roots and recover her authenticity; the opportunity, as a Spirit-filled community, for a new deep-level encounter with the spiritual traditions of India.

If the Charismatic Movement is to be an authentic and effective instrument for the renewal of the Church, it must listen attentively and prayerfully to the voices that are making themselves heard in our country today. The Christian experience, which is its soul and dynamism, must be interpreted in harmony with the signs of the times in India today. This means first, as a condition, that the Renewal must become indigenous – in its thought-patterns and symbolic expressions as well as in its external manifestations. Secondly, and more importantly, it must enter into and make its own the two vital concerns of the Church's mission in the India of today: its concern for justice and peace in a situation of many-sided injustice and conflict; and its mission of inter-religious dialogue with the great religions by which it is surrounded and which claim the allegiance of the majority of our countrymen.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit, Who is the principle of life and activity of the Church from her origins, has come alive today to Christians the world over. The Pentecostal Movement, like other renewal movements, bears eloquent witness to His secret but

22. D. S. Amalorpavadass, *Charismatic Renewal in India* (A Reprint of *Word & Worship* Feb. 1977), NBCLC, Bangalore, 1977, p. 41. (This article is the text of an Address delivered at the 2nd National Charismatic Convention, Bombay 1976):

powerful stirrings in the heart of the Church. The Charismatic Renewal is instinct with this new life, spontaneity and the dynamism of the Spirit, Who seeks to make all things new. As such, it holds out great promise for the renewal of God's people.

But for this it will need to be vigilant and awake to the many inherent dangers that can divert or distort its spiritual energies, or at least diminish its potential for good. In particular, it will need trained and enlightened leadership; communal discernment of its spiritual experience; openness to constructive criticism from whatever quarter; a deeper integration into the life and mission of the Church; and, above all, sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit, Who speaks in the signs of the times. Then it will truly be an instrument of the Spirit for the realization of Pope John's prophetic prayer, "O Holy Spirit, renew Your wonders in this our day as by a new Pentecost!"

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